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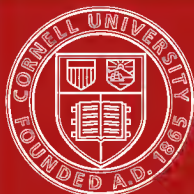
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An introduction to the study of English



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STUDY OF ENGLISH FICTION.

AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE
STUDY OF ENGLISH FICTION.

BY
WILLIAM EDWARD SIMONDS,
PH.D. (STRASSBURG),
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, KNOX COLLEGE.

BOSTON, U. S. A. :
D. C. HEATH & CO., PUBLISHERS.

1898



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By W. E. SIMONDS.

To the Memory

OF

BERNHARD TEN BRINK,

This Book is Dedicated

WITH A PUPIL'S REVERENCE AND A FRIEND'S
AFFECTION.

P R E F A C E.

THERE was a time when by people with pretensions to a careful conscience the "novel" was regarded somewhat dubiously. That time, let us hope, is of the past. The existence of the novel as a form of fiction requires no vindication; no apology is needed for its pre-eminence in the popular taste of the day. Not only are we compelled to recognize the present supremacy of the novel in literature, we have also come to the point of appreciating its utility and power.

The development of English fiction, the evolution of the English novel, forms in itself an interesting story; and an acquaintance with that story is essential to an apprehension of the real qualities of our fiction and to an intelligent estimate of its originality and its merits. To tell this story in outline and to indicate the characteristics of successive epochs in its growth is the purpose of this volume. The teacher may find it difficult to recognize the "text-book" in the preliminary chapters: he is reminded that these chapters form but the preface, and that his text-book begins with what comes after.

With reference to the Selections, a word may be not amiss. The translations from "Beowulf" and "King Horn" are rude enough, and it might have been wiser in the writer to utilize the labors of a more clever translator; he preferred, however, a version original albeit uncouth,

and has been as faithful as he was able to be to the spirit of the text. The Selections which follow are chosen because of special features which seem to fit them for the purpose. Those illustrative of the Elizabethan age are, outside the larger libraries, scarcely accessible to the general student. Because of this fact, a typical romance of that age, "Forbonius and Prisceria," has been incorporated entire. In other cases an incident or episode, in itself complete, has suggested the Selection which has been introduced.

The following pages contain no attempt at formal biography or scientific criticism. No reference has been made to "The Golden Ass" of Apuleius, nor does there appear any discussion of the relation of the novel to the drama; the inter-relation of the English and Spanish romances of the sixteenth century, and that of the French and English tales of an earlier period, receive slight comment. All these omissions will be noted, and may with many similar topics be made the subject of special investigation by the student. To provide a bare introduction to the study of English fiction is the purpose of the book. Its compiler believes thoroughly in the principles of the inductive method, and complacently recognizes the subordination of the essays to the texts they are intended to introduce. If through these pages there be gained a better, a more intelligent acquaintance with these works and with the literature which they represent, the purpose of this Introduction will be accomplished.

W. E. S.

GALESBURG, ILLINOIS,
May 1, 1894.

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE

STUDY OF ENGLISH FICTION.



I.

OLD ENGLISH STORY-TELLERS.

IT is customary to date the rise of the English novel at about the middle of the eighteenth century. Between the years 1740 and 1750 it was, indeed, that Richardson and Fielding began to acquaint a surprised and delighted circle of English readers with what appeared to be a new departure in literary creation. Now the *novel*, as a specific art form, is distinctively a picture of life in its actual experiences, grave or gay, familiar or extraordinary; it is always the presentation of character that is or has been or might be real; and if we think of the novel in this technical and restricted sense, as merely the plain story of the common life of every day, or if we regard the form the story then assumed, the garb it then adopted with the fashion of the times, the assignment of its origin to this period is approximately correct. But it is not so much the English novel as English fiction which we have chosen for our study; and as the first essential quality of fiction, whether in the novel or the romance, is the narrative, the story, it is to a far earlier period that we have to look for origins. Indeed it is with the whole long line of English story-tellers

**The
Beginning.**

that we have to deal, the story-tellers and their heritage, when we undertake to trace the novel back to its earliest sources. The line is unbroken, the craft in this respect is one, whether we look for its beginnings in the eighteenth century or in the eighth.

Were our old English ancestors story-loving, story-telling people? Certainly they were, like all the Keltic and Teutonic races from whom they inherited or with whom they neighbored. Jutes, Angles, Saxons, on the island as on the continent, had their gleemen, who could improvise as well as sing, who caught the story of popular heroes from the people's lips, their deeds that demonstrated not only strength of body but greatness of soul, their turns of fate, — themes which fascinated rude audiences in those rough days, as does the story of Lear the higher culture of the present. They improvised and added and arranged — for that was the province and the privilege of their art — until they wove a tale that held the warriors spell-bound, or brought them to their feet with the jangling of iron shirts of mail, and the ringing of steel on steel, and the hoarse shouting of human voices. It is not difficult to conjure up what must have been an ordinary scene: the long hall, its oaken walls well hung with skins of wolf and fox and bear, the armor glittering ruddy, shields dented by the blows of hostile swords as well as by the friendly poundings of the blacksmith's hammer, bows and arrows, spears for hurling, coats of mail. How the light would dart and sparkle on all this metal ornament, the light that flashed and flickered as the great fire crackled and roared upon the hearthstone! The men — huge fellows, heroic in limb and muscle, rough and boisterous but cheery, good-humored among friends and kinsfolk — sit upon the benches, while they eat noisily of the hearty meal, and empty big horns of foaming ale, until possibly the flames that sparkle among the fir-boughs, and gleam red as blood from the trophies on the hall-side, seek another trysting-place, and shine bright and scorching in fiery glances which shoot from eyes now full of passion, — but for only a moment: the earl, the hall-lord, speaks the haughty

The Glee-
men.

word of quick command ; the roar of voices is hushed, the rattle of the tables ceases, the boasting, the rough play stop. Again the master of the household speaks from his seat of honor on the dais, where, perhaps, his lady sits beside him. Now his tone is gentle ; and at his word the gleeman, striking in personal appearance as in garb, advances bold and confident from the throng, and takes the place assigned him : he tunes his harp, and begins his song. Perhaps it was the Victory of King Aethelstan that he sang, or the Song of the Fight at Maldon. Very likely, if it were in the time of the Edmunds and Edwards and Harolds who reigned just before the Conquest. But if it was at an earlier day, possibly when good King Alfred reigned, and fought the Danes, it is more likely to have been a passage from the great epic of "Beowulf," the national poem which some Anglian singer generations before had brought in its germ from the old home on the bleak northern coast, when the Angles joined their kinsfolk in the historic movement westward, — "Beowulf," the oldest of English and Teutonic tales extant, which we know only in its late revision of the ninth century, as we suppose, although songs of Beowulf had been sung two centuries earlier than that, based upon the adventures of a thane who had lived many generations before this last-named date, and who for his exploits had been made the hero of a myth. What is this song that the gleeman sang, this tale which the Anglo-Saxon warriors so loved to hear?

Hrothgar the Dane, far famed for his victories and for his justice and generosity no less, grown old in years, builds for his men a great mead-hall. There the gray-haired chief-tain assembles his vassals for feasting and mirth ; but **The Story of Beowulf.** an unheard-of horror comes upon Heorot, great hall of Hrothgar. Out from the fen-land, when night falls, stealthily creeps the bog monster, Grendel ; enters the new house where the earls after carousal lie asleep on the benches. One and another and another of Hrothgar's warriors is devoured by the monster ; night after night Grendel devastates the mead-hall. No one of Hrothgar's men is brave enough, is strong enough to cope with the demon. Heorot is deserted ; and the old chief

sits gloomily in his former home to mourn in silence the loss of men and of honor. Up in the Northland Hygelac's thane, Beowulf, young, bold, robust, already famous for a daring feat in swimming, and destined to be Hygelac's heir and successor, hears of Hrothgar's plight and of Grendel. Soon, with a band of chosen men, Beowulf travels southward, follows the whale-path, the swan-road, until he comes to Hrothgar's kingdom. The coast-guard sees the warriors land, and challenges their bold front. Beowulf is led to Hrothgar, and tells his purpose to kill the monster and redeem the land. Gladly does the Dane listen, and generous welcome does he make for the Northmen. Night comes; and once more is Heorot thrown open; the hearth is ablaze; again do the thanes hold revel in the great hall of Hrothgar. Wassail is drunk, stories are told, bold boasts made; the walls re-echo the warriors' shouts. Hardly do they die away, and scarcely have the revellers lost themselves in slumber on the benches, when the fearful fen-dragon approaches; he has heard the noise of feasting from afar, and now the black monster steals toward the hall, laughing as he thinks of his prey. The fire has died out, and all is darkness. One of Hrothgar's men is seized and devoured. Raging, with lust for flesh aroused, Grendel grasps another in his claws. But it is the hero whom the bog-monster has unwittingly caught; and now Beowulf, roused for vengeance, starts up to battle with Grendel. Unarmed the hero grapples with the enemy. The hall sways with the shock of the fighting. He clutches Grendel by the wrist; never had the monster felt a grasp like that. The muscles ache, the cords of the demon's arm are snapping, the shoulder tears itself from the socket, the weary marsh-dweller gropes his way blindly forth, and weakly wends toward his foul home in the swampland. Grendel is wounded to the death. Beowulf rests after victory, and shows the hideous claw, his war-trophy, to the Danes. Great joy comes to Hrothgar with the dawn; but with the night woe returns. Grendel's mother issues from the death-breeding marshes, and invades the hall of Heorot. Once more there is wailing among the thanes; once more sorrow rests on Hrothgar's house; but

once again the hero girds himself for battle. With his faithful men Beowulf enters the fatal fen-land ; he stands upon the shore of the mist-covered inlet where the marsh-demons breed. Strange and loathsome shapes appear, half shrouded in the fog ; the nickers and the water-sprites laugh exultant, with monstrous eyes glaring at the hero from the cloudy waves of the mere. Here Beowulf equips himself, — puts on his best corselet, grasps the strongest brand ; then he enters the dark water, presses down through the flood, beset by the sea-monsters, bruised by their sharp tusks, undaunted, down, down to the dwelling of Grendel and Grendel's mother : a day's journey is it for the hero before he reaches the abode of the demon. Meanwhile his men keep watch and ward above : gloom settles on them ; doubt fills their hearts with dread. The day drags by : no sight of their hero. Still they wait, and silent, stare on the sea. Now a commotion stirs the thick water ; the surface boils under the mists ; blood rolls up red through the foam ; and Beowulf's men yield to grief and despair. But grief gives place to joy, sorrow to gladness. The hero emerges from the horrible sea-flood, bringing news of the she-demon's slaughter and a new trophy, Grendel's head : this it was that sent the red blood welling up through the mere-flood when Beowulf smote the dead monster's body. Loud is the rejoicing ; triumphantly do the Northmen give the Danes warning of their home-coming. Rich are the gifts bestowed by Hrothgar ; great is the feasting. Then Beowulf's men think of the home-land ; the slippery sea-rover is launched, the warriors embark with their presents, and Beowulf says farewell to Hrothgar, and steers north to Hygelac's land.

Beowulf achieves another adventure. Now he is old : as Hygelac's successor, fifty winters he has ruled well and wisely, and his land has prospered ; but an enemy now destroys his men, and by night the land is laid waste. This time it is a fire-drake with which Beowulf must battle ; and the hero goes forth, dauntless as ever, to meet the monster. But now his men prove cowards ; the hero is left alone to fight with the dragon, — alone but for Wiglaf, who stands behind his lord's shield and helps as

he may. Long they fight, monster and man : this is no Grendel, this fire-spurter. The fierce heat shrivels up the shield ; the heroes are hard pressed ; at last Wiglaf disables the dragon, Beowulf gives the death-blow. But Beowulf, too, has been hurt, and, though victor, lies sick of his death-wound. Then Wiglaf brings forth the hoard from the cave where the worm had so long guarded it, and Beowulf feasts his eyes ere they close upon the vast treasure he bequeaths to his people. The hero is dead : rear his funeral pyre ! Upon the tall promontory, a beacon to sailors, friends burn the body ; and the flame and smoke bear the hero's soul upward.

Such are the stories that children love to tell, to which they delight to listen. It is altogether idle to discuss whether or not this be the record in allegory of the coast-dweller's ceaseless war on the terrible forces of ocean and storm, or if it speaks of the stealthy approach of the malaria and the fever till the hero builds the dikes and drains the marshes. These are the tales our Anglo-Saxon forefathers loved, because they told the story of stout-hearted heroes, tireless and dauntless, who contended not only with flesh and blood, but with those mysterious hosts, those uncanny powers of sea and air, whose existence they believed and had sometimes proved, but whose nature and form lie hidden in the darkness of fog and night.

Now for a long time there was no worthy product of English pen possessing the same character of narrative fiction which we have found in the national epic of "Beowulf." Metrical paraphrases of Scripture history, legends of the saints and martyrs, a rarely occasional lyric of notable sweetness and pathos, formed the literary matter of the period and the gleeman's stock in trade. But with the advent of the Normans in the eleventh century, a new stimulus was felt in this department of our literature. Over in Normandy French poets had already sung the "Song of Roland," in character and quality inferior as it was dissimilar to the old English song of which we have just been reading. And now the English gleeman gave place to the Nor-

**Significance
of the Story.**

**Among the
Normans.**

man minstrel, and tales of French heroes sung in a foreign tongue were heard in the banqueting-halls of William and his nobles, and echoed indeed beyond the walls through the length and breadth of England. Strange stories of Charlemagne and his twelve paladins, abounding in the reports of jousts and contests, of tricks and cunning ; the adventures of Grecian Alexander, too ; tales of the Fall of Troy ; and numerous other subjects, many of them borrowed from the East, — formed the theme of minstrel and jongleur, and kept their place through long years to come. More nearly related to English scenes, and yet an importation from the poetry of France, were the traditionary romances of Arthur and his knights, the scene of which belonged to Wales. The most important and the immediate effect of this Norman-French influence upon our own English literature was seen in the revival in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of an interest in the deeds of English heroes and the traditions native to English soil. This interest speedily manifested itself in the similar treatment of English themes, and, a little later, a treatment of these themes in English speech ; for by that time the English spirit and the English language had proved stronger than the Norman, and now prevailed. The deeds of Hereward the Saxon had been told in Latin, and then in Norman verse ; English paraphrases now appeared. Similarly, also, the adventures of Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Hampton, local heroes of tradition, were sung by Anglo-Norman poets, and then in the English tongue. A second influence of the Norman-French poetry is traceable in a new element which now appears in the treatment of these English themes : this is the element of love. The old Saxons in their rude way had sung of battle and of booty ; wild tales of adventure and daring had been told, but never a word of the tenderer passion of love, no recognition of woman's subtle power in the hearts and lives of men, until the Norman troubadours had introduced their forms of courtly gallantry, and softly sung the devotion of brave knights to fair ladies, and spoken of the rewards of love. For the life and spirit of the time had changed ; the days of chivalry had dawned. Among the earliest of our English poems to reflect

this influence of the French are the two metrical romances of "Havelok the Dane" and "King Horn."

"A song I shall you sing
Of Murry the king,"

is the quaint beginning of this latter poem. Murry is king of South Daneland; his queen is Godhild; they have an only son, whose name is Horn. One day the sea-robbers —

Story of King Horn. Saracens, the poem calls them — descend upon King Murry's shores, the king is slain, his queen driven into hiding, and Horn, his son, with twelve comrades is taken prisoner. But the rare beauty of the youth excites the pity of the pagan leader, and instead of putting them to the sword, their captors place the boys in a boat and set them adrift on the open sea. Miraculously the waves drive the ship to Westernesse, where King Ailmar adopts Horn and provides for his education. Horn grows in favor with all men; but most of all he is loved by the king's daughter, Maiden Rymenhild. Now the early comrades of the young prince are still in his company, and two of them are especially connected with the fate and fortunes of Childe Horn: one is Athulf, his trusty friend; the other, Fikenhild, who is a traitor. By the treachery of this latter, Ailmar is deceived, and Horn is banished from the land. New adventures, new wanderings follow; at last Horn arrives in Ireland, and becomes King Thurston's man. For seven years he remains in Ireland a banished man, but always faithful to his love. Meanwhile King Modi of Reynes sues for the hand of Maiden Rymenhild; Ailmar assents, and the wedding-day is set. Rymenhild and Athulf send a messenger to search for Horn and to warn him to return. Horn is found in time, arrives in Westernesse on the day of the marriage, attends the feast disguised as a pilgrim, and in dramatic fashion expels the intruder and claims his own. But the course of true love does not yet run smoothly. Horn departs again, now to claim his rights in his home in Daneland. This he succeeds in doing, and discovers his mother, Queen Godhild, still

alive. Again word comes from the bride in haste ; Rymenhild is once more in mortal peril, — this time at the hands of the traitor Fikenhild. Again Horn returns, rescues his betrothed, and all ends joyously with the wedding and a happy return to South Daneland, where Horn is king.

“King Horn” belongs, doubtless, to the thirteenth century, and is an excellent specimen of the old metrical romance. The love-story has now become an element in English literature ; it is the very kernel in the romance of “King Horn,” although oddly, as it seems to us, the heroine woos the hero, and Horn is far too passive as a lover to suit the Rymenhilds of a later day.

**The new
Motive.**

Along with these metrical romances, there were circulating in popular form during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, numerous shorter works of similar character, although differing from these more important creations and from each other in outward shape. For the most part this minor fiction was anecdotal in character. Collections of short stories in prose, like the “Gesta Romanorum” and the “Process of the Seven Sages,” were translated into English. Short metrical tales were numerous, the best gradually appearing in the early ballads, — treasuries of folk-lore, if not of fact, the almost mysterious creations of the nameless poets of the people. Truly, they who told the tales of “Sir Patrick Spens” and “Chevy Chace” are worthy of a reference in the annals of English story-telling ; and they who first sang the gestes of “Robin Hood” will never fail of recognition, even though their names are lost in the dimness of obscurity. By far the most noteworthy of these early romances, however, are those which embalm the traditions and legends of King Arthur. The knightly exploits of Arthur’s followers, the stories of courtly love and of unlawful passion, mystical tales of adventure in search of the holy Graal, — these themes won all the greater interest and attention because they centred around a national hero who had found a home in Wales. Chrétien de Troyes and German Wolfram likewise sang the Graal-saga ; but English story-tellers

**Tales and
Ballads.**

claimed, and have since claimed, blameless King Arthur as their own.

About the year 1340 Geoffrey Chaucer was born ; and with his advent English literature advanced with almost incredible strides. A great writer whose title was indisputable was now arisen on English soil. A poet, a chronicler, a dramatist, a novelist, — although he composed no actual drama and wrote no formal novel, Chaucer was each of these, for his writings contain the germs of all these forms of literature ; he might have been the “morning-star” of all. Many of “The Canterbury Tales” are perfect examples of that popular branch of literature indicated by the name ; the story of the “dronken millere,” for example, as well as the reeve’s tale which follows it. Of a higher grade are the stories of Patient Griselde, related by the Oxford clerk, and the familiar tale of the “three riot-toures” and Death. Yet it is far rather the entire collection of the Tales with their setting and their telling which displays the genius of this prince of story-tellers. Here is a little band of English people of all the orders, “wel nyne and twenty in a companye,” to whom two or three others are afterward added ; each distinctly drawn in character and personality, from the gentle knight returned from following in his lord’s wars abroad and the sentimental prioress with her greyhounds and her “Amor vincit omnia,” to the coarse sailor and the thievish pardoner whose bag is stuffed full of clouts and pig’s bones which he sells for relics. How artfully the stories are linked in their plausible arrangement ; what perfect self-revealing have we here of each person in the company, as the pilgrims wend their way toward Canterbury ! This it is that proves Chaucer’s dramatic skill. “The Canterbury Tales” is not a mere collection of diverting narratives gathered by the author to amuse his readers : it is one book, is to be taken as a whole, a unit. It is a picture of Chaucer’s England that we see, and the best example of ambitious character painting up to that time attempted. The Canterbury pilgrims were alive, and have lived as real characters in English literature ever since.

And yet Chaucer wrote one romance which more than “The

Canterbury Tales" contains the spirit of our modern novel. This is the "Troilus and Criseyde." Here love is the theme and motive; here gallantry calls all its arts into play; here, alas, the perversity of fickle womanhood receives a careful portraiture in a most heartless type. In the wooing of King Horn, Maiden Rymenhild played the hero's part; but now that day is gone forever. In Chaucer's romance the lover languishes, while the lady is coy though not averse.

**Troilus and
Criseyde.**

Success attends the wooing, but disaster follows, and the end is most affecting tragedy. No work in character drawing superior to some of that in this poem was ever done by Chaucer. The wily Pandar, the fickle Criseyde are inimitable; on the other hand, the portrait of the hero is less satisfactory: he is too languishing, too sentimental, too weak. None of the metrical romances which preceded Chaucer's time had been told with such sweet artfulness as this. The material he used had been borrowed, as was the case in most of the "Tales;" but the master touches were his own, and mark him greatly superior to Byron in practically the same field.

The stories of "Beowulf" and "King Horn," together with the numberless compositions similar in material and purpose, had been told in verse. It was natural enough that this should be: tales which were sung or chanted to the accompaniment of the harp, lengthy stories which were oftener confided to the singer's memory and rarely to the manuscript,—these should move to rhythm and possess some sort of rhyme, that the minstrel's recollection might be aided, and that the listener's ear might be not uncharmed with melody. When this form of entertainment passed away, and the minstrel gave place to the scribe and copyist, the accompaniment of verse became unnecessary and unnatural; but it was long before this fact was realized, even though now and then a coarse story had already found its way into unmelodious prose. This slowness in the development of English prose narrative is not altogether to be wondered at. Force of example is strong; and this is what made the "Troilus and Criseyde" a metrical romance—the last,

The Form.

as it was the best — rather than, as it might naturally have been, the first of English romances in prose. This was an accident in form. What is more remarkable is the fact that Chaucer had no immediate successor in the field of realistic art, in prose or poetry ; that he marked not only the climax, but the culmination of this new movement in English literature ; and that in the painting of character, of life actual and real, we meet no serious attempt in an interval of two hundred years.

II

THE ROMANCE AT THE COURT OF
ELIZABETH.

SOMETIME in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, while the struggle between the houses of York and Lancaster was not yet over, William Caxton, a well-to-do silk-merchant of London, made the acquaintance of certain Dutch in-
The First
Printer.
ventors who told him of a new art for making books.

So enamored with this art did Caxton become that he bought a press, and came with it home to London; and thus at the very time when bold Duke Gloster was preparing the way for bad King Richard, this far-sighted merchant-tradesman set up in Westminster the first printing-shop in England, and began to manufacture books. Sixty-four volumes in all were printed on his presses; of these a large proportion were works of fiction.

Among the earliest of Caxton's publications an edition of "The Canterbury Tales" found a conspicuous place. Indeed, this first edition was closely followed by a second, based upon a better text; and Chaucer's popularity with the reading public is further attested by the appearance shortly after of his "Troilus and Criseyde," now for the first time in type. In 1485 Caxton's enterprise and good taste—for the one quality is always as prominent as the other—led him to print a volume which Sir Thomas Malory had completed fifteen years before. This was the story of King Arthur, told in graceful and melodious English prose, and, under the title of "Morte d'Arthur," familiar to every schoolboy of our time. Once more the old tales of the Knights of the Table Round had been sought and gathered for English readers; nor were they to appear again in so attractive form until

rewoven and retold by England's latest laureate in the "Idylls of the King."

There is little to interest the student of English fiction occurring between the accession of Henry and that of Elizabeth.

The Utopia of Sir Thomas More. Many French and Italian romances were read in England, and some collections of tales of adventure in love and war found their way into English through translation. The one notable work at all related to the class of fictitious narrative was Sir Thomas More's "Utopia;" and this was rather a political treatise than a novel or a romance. The "Utopia" was written in Latin, and printed at Louvain, in 1516; by the middle of the century it had been translated into English, and is commonly referred to as an English work. The narrative tells of a wonderful country, the State of Nowhere, — a land where religion was left to individual conscience, and war considered an unmitigated evil; where the people studied the problems of labor and crime, and sought how to promote the interests of public health, education, and comfort. "Citizens ruled by good and wholesome laws, — that is an exceeding rare and hard thing." Sir Thomas must have felt the truth of his own observation still more deeply when, but a few brief years later, he stood upon the scaffold for conscience' sake, at the will of his tyrannous master, Henry VIII. So the world first heard of Utopia: no wonder that its fame became widespread. Rabelais knew of its whereabouts, and drew upon its inhabitants to "refresh, people, and adorn" the new kingdom founded by Pantagruel in Dispodie. The "Utopia" was a product of the new learning, and was instinct with the genius of common sense. Dream though it was, most of its scheme has worked its way into the constitution of modern England, and to a surprising degree into the reality of modern thought. For its method and for its influence upon subsequent essayists in this line of writing, the "Utopia" deserves a place in our category. Pamphlet or romance, narrative or philosophy, tract or story, it became the pattern in English literature for the "New Atlantis" and the diverting narrative of Captain Lemuel Gulliver; it has been a

storehouse as well as a model for such as write latter-day pamphlets or claim the privilege of looking backward from beyond.

But this was not the sort of literature that pleased the fine ladies and gentlemen who waited upon the Virgin Queen. John Lyly (1554-1606) was the earliest of that group of courtly writers, and, in a sense, the most important. **John Lyly and "Euphues."** He set the fashion for the rest, and gave them a name which has been used to distinguish them ever since. When twenty-five years old, he wrote two books: "Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit," and "Euphues, his England;" "wherein are contained," says Lyly, "the delights that wit followeth in his youth by the pleasantness of Love, and the happiness he reapeth in age by the perfectness of wisdom." The tone of this formidable title will indicate something of the nature of the tale; for, as matter of fact, "Euphues" is more notable for the singular form in which it was couched than for any startling degree of interest pertaining to the plot. It is the story of a young Athenian who, in his travels, arrives eventually in England. The results of his observation and meditation Euphues conveys to a friend, by name Philautus; especially does he dwell upon the disposition and nature of woman, and the woeful effects of love, until we are reminded that our hero has been anything but happy in his experiences with the sex, so bitter are his animadversions on these and kindred topics. Philautus, happily for the reader as well as for himself, is not so completely under the saturnine influence of his friend, but that a pretty little love story is at last developed, wherein Philautus appears in love with an English damsel, and Euphues, the sly hypocrite, is found aiding and abetting the lovers in their plans.

Lyly adopted an odd, fantastic style of diction in writing his romance, — a style originating in Italy and Spain, consisting of an elaborate balance gained by the use of antithesis, a generous employment of alliteration, and withal an **Euphuism** extravagant, bombastic language that seems to us to-day fit only for the purposes of the ridiculous. "There is no privilege that

needeth a *pardon*, neither is there any *remission* to be *asked*, where a *commission* is *granted*. I speak this, Gentlemen, not to excuse the *offence* which was *taken*, but to offer a *defence* where I was *mistaken*." Imagine whole pages of this depravity ! And yet the jargon became extremely popular in courtly circles, and left a decided impression upon the literature of that age. Even the great Shakespeare, although in the character of Don Armado, the fantastical Spaniard of "Love's Labor's Lost," he satirizes the bombastic fluency of euphuism, nevertheless himself delights evidently in the extravagant diction and elaborate conceits that were its most effective characteristics. Lyly set the fashion for the literature of Queen Eliza's court, and the story-tellers of the time at once took up the style and wrote their books accordingly. The name of Euphues became a word to conjure by. The host of imitators made a bid for popularity by borrowing the hero's name. "Zelauto, the fountain of Fame . . . containing a delicate disputation given for a friendly entertainment to Euphues at his late arrival into England," was the title of a book published in 1580. Lyly's contemporary, Greene, wrote "Euphues, his censure to Philautus," in 1587, and "Menaphon, Camilla's alarm to slumbering Euphues," in 1589. And scores of tales similar in style if not in name were furnished by the euphuists, and eagerly read and applauded by the people. As has been hinted, it is clearly evident that our prince of dramatists was himself enamored of these romantic compositions, and found the suggestion, if not details, for more than one great play in these euphuistic romances which we are now describing. The plots of "Twelfth Night" and "The Winter's Tale" were drawn from two stories of this group ; "As You Like It" is merely a dramatization of Lodge's "Rosalynde ;" and a collection of tales translated from the Italian and French, known as "Paynter's Palace of Pleasure," supplied the plots of "Romeo and Juliet," "All 's Well that Ends Well," and "Measure for Measure."

Among the followers of Lyly the names of Lodge and Greene are notable. Thomas Lodge (1558(?)-1625) wrote "The

Delectable Historie of Forbonius and Prisceria" in 1584, and in 1590 told the tale of "Rosalynde;" first revealing to us in one of the best romances of his day the charming secrets of that far-off Forest of Arden, destined to be still further explored and made familiar to the world by the great dramatist who followed him. A third romance, "A Margarite of America," is attributed to this author, although it professes to be a translation from a Spanish work discovered by the story-teller in the Jesuits' Library at Santos in Brazil, in 1592. Lodge was a great traveller in his day, and spent almost as much time on the sea as on shore. Besides the three romances mentioned, the works of this writer were either political or poetical in character. For a number of years Lodge followed the practice of medicine; dying in 1625, at the age of sixty-seven or sixty-eight.

Thomas Lodge
and Robert
Greene.

Robert Greene (1560-1592) was another euphuistic weaver of old-time romance; but while Lodge lived the regular life of a discreet and eminently respectable London "gentleman of Lincoln's Inn," Greene appears to have been a perfect Bohemian by profession. An odd combination of the honorable and disgraceful, appreciative of the finer and purer qualities of character, he was devoted to pursuits of pleasure, and seems to have possessed not the slightest self-control. His stories were suggestive of his character, and the struggle of good and evil was his most frequent theme. Greene was the author of several *naïve* "Repentances," in which he appears of course as hero. But along with his political pamphlets, his satires, his poems, and his plays, Greene wrote, too, several readable novels, — that is, of course, as novels went in that day. By turns he drew upon the Italian, the Danish, the Greek, to supply his characters; now Sicily, now Egypt, was the scene of his romance. The most successful of his stories appears to have been that same "Pandosto," a romantic history of Sicilian and Bohemian kings and shepherds, their jealousies and loves, which, happily, was to catch the fancy of the master who told again the story in a certain romantic "Winter's Tale." And then Greene went to real life for his material, and

was the first, perhaps, of English writers to try the experiment of describing half realistically, for the amusement of the polite world, that lower stratum of society whose heroes are gentlemen of the road and whose heroines are members of the demi-monde. In this latter sort of literature Greene had a few imitators, not many, chief of whom was Thomas Nash.

Thomas Nash (1567-1600) was another typical Bohemian, half genius, half vagabond, who, like many another man of talent in that day, paid the penalty of his irregularities and

**Thomas Nash,
Realist.**

excesses by an early death. His most successful novel was called "The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jack Wilton," and was published in 1594. "Jack Wilton" was a prototype of such works as the "Colonel Jack" and "Moll Flanders" of Defoe. It pretended to be the autobiography of a page who was at once a rascal and a wit, and whose spicy adventures at home and abroad are certainly diverting, if not exactly unto edification. Naturally, the book is not written with the skill of the later novelists; it is only a step forward in the art, but it is a notable advance toward realism and the actualities of life, low life though it be. Historical personages appear as characters in the novel. Sir Thomas More is one, and another is Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, whom Wilton attends as page; Francis I. is introduced, and the closing scene includes a description of the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

No discussion of the fiction of low life, as exemplified in the "Repentances" of Greene and the "Jack Wilton" of Thomas Nash, would be complete without some reference to

**Spanish
Influence.**

the so-called picaresque romance, which made its appearance in Spanish literature just after the close of the first half of the sixteenth century. In 1553 Diego Hurtado de Mendoza published his "Lazarillo de Tórmes." It assumes to be the autobiography of a boy from the lowest class, who is sent forth into the world as the comrade of a blind beggar. By cunning and impudence he makes his way; and his adventures were found so diverting, his imperturbable good-humor so un-failing, that the "Little Lazarus" speedily grew into an almost

extravagant popularity; indeed, the hero of Mendoza's romance became the traditional character of the type, and a whole literature in imitation of the "*Lazarillo de Tórmes*" sprang into existence, flourishing in Spain contemporaneously with the English works of Greene and Nash, and those of their successors, Nicholas Breton (1542-1626), Henry Chettle (died 1607), and Thomas Dekker (died 1641). The most successful Spanish romance of this type was the "*Guzman de Alfarache*" of Maled Aleman, the first part of which was published at Madrid in 1599, the second at Valencia in 1605. This second part was widely read in an excellent English translation made later in the century, and, indeed, passed over into almost all the languages of Europe, becoming evidently one of the most popular fictions of that age. It is easy to overlook reciprocal influences of this kind; yet it must not be forgotten that in the period with which we are dealing there was no real isolation of the literatures of France, Italy, England, and Spain, but, on the contrary, a mutual familiarity and a close inter-relation, fostered by a general culture and a prevalent habit of travel, which did much to introduce foreign fashions, and to establish community of taste.

Among the brilliant throng that graced the Court of the Virgin Queen, there was no gentleman more accomplished in the courtly graces, or more generally honored and beloved, than Sir Philip Sidney. His birth was noble, his tastes were high, his character chivalric to the last degree. All through his somewhat stormy and romantic life he bore himself ever as the ideal knight, without fear and without reproach. Besides his group of passionate love-sonnets, entitled "*Astrophel and Stella*," Sir Philip Sidney left behind him at his death an elaborate pastoral romance, which in the year 1580 he had begun to indite solely for the entertainment and diversion of the Countess, his sister. Sidney never designed his romance for publication; as he sent the sheets to his sister, he charged her to destroy them, saying, "For severer eyes it is not, being but a trifle, and that triflingly handled." Sidney died in 1586, and in 1590 the romance thus composed was published at London, under the title

**Sir Philip
Sidney
and his
"Arcadia."**

of "The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia." Again we trace the influence of the continental literature of the day; for although "Euphues" had appeared in 1579, none of the romantic works of Greene or Lodge had yet been written when Sir Philip Sidney began his story. The direct inspiration of this romance is to be found in the "Diana Enamorada," — a pastoral romance by Jorge de Montemayor, published at Valencia in 1542. Montemayor was a Portuguese by birth, although his life was spent largely in Spain. His model in turn was an Italian work of much earlier origin, — the "Arcadia" of Sannazaro, which had appeared at Naples in 1504. By the close of the sixteenth century the pastoral romance, of which this early "Arcadia" was the prototype, had won its way into all the literatures of Europe, entirely supplanting the older romance of chivalry, of which the "Amadis de Gaula" was the most famous and most influential example. Cervantes, the great satirist of the romances of chivalry, was himself the author of a prose pastoral bearing the title "Galatea;" and yet another "Arcadia" came, later, from the hand of Lope de Vega. A singular fact concerning these romances is that in many of them characters and incidents from real life were introduced by the writers; and this interesting characteristic is said to have added very naturally to their popularity. In "The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia," Sir Philip Sidney combines the prominent characteristics of the chivalrous and the pastoral romance. The scene is placed in the old shepherd state of central Greece. There are thrilling adventures and exploits of superhuman heroism, of which Love is generally the instigator; and the peculiar excellence of Sidney's effort lies in his attempt to depict the passion in individuals of varied character and of opposite rank. Kings and queens, princes and princesses, shepherds and shepherdesses appear in character or in disguise.

The friendship of Musidorus and Pyrocles is like that of David and Jonathan; and the plot is well calculated to bring out acts of devotion on the part of one to the other. The heroes are in love with the two daughters of a king of Arcadia. The name of one of the princesses is Pamela; and

The Plot.

besides the employment of this name for his own heroine, Richardson by and by was to show still further evidence of the influence exerted by Sidney's romance. By the force of circumstance, Prince Musidorus dons a shepherd's garb, while Prince Pyrocles is compelled to assume the disguise of an Amazon, and appears so femininely beautiful in this character that King Basilius now falls desperately in love with him; the old king's passion is not, however, so disastrous in its consequences as is that of his queen, who is not deceived by the disguise, but succumbs completely to the hero whom she discerns. The defects of the "Arcadia" are those which prevail universally in the fiction of the time, — an artificiality and a want of realism which characterized all these works alike, and which appear indeed to be the very qualities that gave them interest and popularity. The "Arcadia" became the most admired romance of its day, and was read and re-read in the home and at the court, until the fine ladies and gentlemen who surrounded Elizabeth affected the language and conceits of "Arcadia" as they had formerly aped the antithetical extravagance of "Euphues."

If now we review briefly all that has been said, and attempt to characterize these works as a class, inquiring as to the influences that contributed to their origin, we notice, first, that nearly all were couched in a peculiar, fantastic form of prose; and, secondly, that as a group they are narratives of a life supposed to be contemporaneous, although for the most part utterly separated from regions of the real, and set in the shepherd lands of Arcadia, or in some wildwood of Arden, remote from the ordinary and familiar haunts of men. The few realistic novels — if we have a right to apply that title to any of the fiction of the sixteenth century, the two or three by Greene and Nash describing the Ned Browns and the Jack Wiltons of the period — are exceptions to the rule, and as examples of realism are conspicuous because of their rarity. It is the euphuistic and Arcadian romance that sets the model for the literature of that day; indeed, we might go further, and declare that, broadly speaking, these improbable, these extravagant, these unreal crea-

**Character-
istics.**

tions were typical of the time itself, and even reflect the character and spirit of the time as accurately and as clearly as the most realistic novels of common life could have done, or as do the licentious dramas of the Restoration reveal the rampant license of the reign of the second Charles.

In some directions the era of Elizabeth was an era of extravagance if not of excess. The English nation had fairly attained

its greatness, and its confidence in itself had been confirmed. The Church had thrown off its allegiance to the Papacy, and the State had maintained its inde-

The Elizabethan Age. pendence of Rome. Rich colonies had been established; an English sailor had circumnavigated the globe; naval victories had been gloriously won against surprising odds; the Great Armada had been driven ignominiously back to Spain; Britain was undisputed mistress of the sea. Never yet had the kingdom stood so comfortably and confidently on her feet. Moreover, England was ruled now by a queen who, whatever we may feel concerning her aspirations or her character, was not only herself imbued with the romantic spirit of the sunset days of chivalry, but beyond a doubt inspired in the responsive breasts of the high-spirited, warm-blooded knights about her that same passion of chivalry, that almost idyllic worship of herself as England's queen, that throws a glow of idealism on the characters of Raleigh and Essex and Sidney, with those other knights of lesser name and equal spirit, and makes the era of Elizabeth heroic. These were the type men of the time: Raleigh, the bold adventurer, explorer, soldier, leading the court in gallantry as he throws his purple cloak to spare the jewelled slipper of his queen from contact with the muddy streets of London; Devereux, Earl of Essex, now the petted favorite of his royal mistress, now in a boyish fury of bravado flinging himself at the head of a conspiracy to make her prisoner; Sir Philip Sidney, inditing ardent sonnets to his lost love, and pushing the water from his fevered lips at Zutphen because a poor private "had the greater need." These men felt the spirit of the time, and each in his way obeyed the impulse that was irresistible. It was no wonder that a feverish

exaltation held them ; that a luxuriant improvidence, a wild extravagance was characteristic of the age. Young men scarce out of boyhood embarked on great ventures, vast fortunes were squandered as rapidly as they had been gathered ; and the extravagance and excess were as the reckless indiscretions of a vigorous and affluent youth who has entered his heritage, and stands free of all restraint.

Is it likely that such a public would be absorbed in analyses of character, or is it reasonable to suppose that quiet scenes of homely life would have held their interest or attention? The ordinary, the probable, — that was the very thing they cared least about ; it was not a day of realism, but of romance. The very scene of their fictions must be as far removed as possible from localities familiar ; there was a charm about the thought of lovers who tended sheep in Arcady, that favorite haunt of shepherds and lovelorn swains in the world of imagination. But even here there was no pretension of reality ; everybody knew that when a hero or heroine appeared with pipe or crook by the grassy bank of some Arcadian streamlet, it was only in a pleasant masquerade ; and no one was a whit the more deceived by the costume of the shepherdesses and the bleatings of the white-fleeced lambs, than by the fêtes and masques which formed no unimportant or infrequent diversion of the court. The costumes were of rich material, and stiff with gems ; the soft white wool upon the “seely sheepe” had been well washed and combed before the curtain rose. But this was all poetical, let who will deny its charm, or laugh it into ridicule. It was all as pretty as a picture ; and that is what it was, an idyll. Things came right at last in Arcady ; and those who sought the greenwood of Arden found each his just desert in the end. That pleased the people who read stories in Queen Eliza’s day ; and if lions were encountered in French forests, or did ships sail into Bohemia direct, what need of criticism or of doubt? To them the romancer was indeed a wizard, — he was creator of men and women ; and where he placed them there they were, and what he bade them that they did. This is the reign of the imagina-

The Romantic Spirit.

tion, but of imagination ungoverned and untrained. The "Faerie Queene" was intensely typical of the era. It is too late to speak of it as a link in the development of the novel, for now we are beyond that stage of story-telling ; but as a poem, full of chivalric devotion to the Virgin Queen of England, and of man's best aspirations for his country and himself, Spenser's "Faerie Queene," with all the romantic character and incident of its scenes, is the embodiment in verse of the spirit of the age. And Shakespeare's dramas, from the airy fantasy of the "Midsummer-Night's Dream" to the wild impetuosity and superb fatality of "Macbeth," are, in their marvellous conceptions and their robust turbulence of expression, but the natural outburst of its passion. The age and its romance are intertwined and complementary ; the two are one.

THE ROMANCES.	THE DRAMA.	POETRY.
Lyly's <i>Euphues</i>, 1579. <i>Euphues</i>, Second Part, 1580. Sidney's <i>Arcadia</i>, begun 1580. Greene's <i>Mamillia</i>, 1580. <i>Mamillia</i>, Second Part, 1583. Greene's <i>Gwidonius</i>, 1584. Greene's <i>Arbasto</i>, 1584. Lodge's <i>Forbonius and Prisceria</i>, 1584. Greene's <i>Morando</i>, 1586. <i>Morando</i>, Second Part, 1587. Greene's <i>Farewell to Folly</i>, 1587. Greene's <i>Penelope's Web</i>, 1587. Greene's <i>Euphues' Censure to Philautus</i>, 1587. Greene's <i>Perimedes the Blacksmith</i>, 1588. Greene's <i>Pandosto</i>, 1588. Greene's <i>Alcida</i>, 1588. Greene's <i>Menaphon</i>, 1588. Greene's <i>Orpharion</i>, 1590. Greene's <i>Never Too Late</i>, 1590. Greene's <i>Mourning Garment</i>, 1590. Lodge's <i>Rosalynde</i>, 1590. Sidney's <i>Arcadia</i>, published 1590. Greene's <i>Cony-catching Pamphlets</i>, 1591. <i>Cony-catching Pamphlets</i>, Third Part, 1592. Greene's <i>Philomela</i>, 1592. Greene's <i>Ned Brown</i>, 1592. Nash's <i>Unfortunate Traveller</i>, 1593. Lodge's <i>Margarite of America</i>, 1598.	Christopher Marlowe, 1564-1593. Tamburlane, 1590. Dr. Faustus, <i>The Jew of Malta</i>, previous to 1592. Peele's <i>Edward I.</i>, 1588. Kyd's <i>Cornelia</i>, 1594. Ben Jonson, 1574-1637. <i>Every Man in his Humor</i>, 1596. Francis Beaumont, 1586-1616. John Fletcher, 1576-1625. Thomas Dekker, 1570-1637. John Marston, 1575-1633. Philip Massinger, 1584-1640. John Ford, 1586-1640. William Shakespeare, 1564-1616. <i>Love's Labor's Lost</i>. <i>Comedy of Errors</i>. <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i>. <i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>. Henry VI. (three parts). Richard III. Richard II. King John. Henry IV. (two parts). Henry V. <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>. <i>Merchant of Venice</i>. <i>Taming of the Shrew</i>. <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i>. <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>. <i>As You Like It</i>. <i>Twelfth Night</i>. <i>Julius Cæsar</i>, (?) 1601. <i>Hamlet</i>, (?) 1602.	Edmund Spenser. <i>Faerie Queene</i>. Sir Philip Sidney. <i>Defence of Poesy</i>. Thomas Nashe. <i>Richard III.</i> <i>Laws of the Medes</i>. Michael Drayton. <i>Englands Echo</i>. 1598. Francis Bacon. <i>Essays</i>. Hakluyt. <i>Ariosto's Orlando Furioso</i>. <i>transl.</i> <i>ringed with Diamonds</i>. Tasso's <i>Jerusalem Delivered</i>. <i>transl.</i> <i>fax, 1600</i>. Chapman. <i>Mer...</i>

PROSE.	FOREIGN.	HISTORICAL.
1552-1599. andar, 1579. 590-1596. 1554-1586. e, 1595. 1536-1608. 1553-1600. istical Pol- 563-1631. l Epistles, 1-1626. ries), 1597. , 1589. Furioso, John Har- Delivered, ward Fair- tion of Ho-	<i>France.</i> Ronsard, 1525-1585. Montaigne, 1533-1592. Garnier, 1545-1601. Malherbes, 1556-1628. Descartes, 1596-1650. <i>Germany.</i> Hans Sachs, died 1576. Grotius, 1583-1645, Kepler, 1571-1630. Rubens, 1577-1640. Van Dyck, born 1599. <i>Italy.</i> Tasso, 1544-1595. Jerusalem Delivered, 1581. Galileo, 1564-1642. Tintoretto, 1518-1594. <i>Spain.</i> Cervantes, 1547-1616. Don Quixote, 1605. Lope de Vega, 1562-1635. Calderon, born 1600. Mendoza, 1503-1575. Montemayor, died 1561.	Elizabeth reigned 1558-1603. Cecil, Lord Burleigh, 1520- 1598. Earl of Essex, 1567-1601. Sir Walter Raleigh, 1552- 1618. William the Silent, 1533-1584. Battle of Lepanto, 1571. Massacre of St. Bartholomew, 1572. Blackfriars Theatre built 1576. The Rose and the Curtain, 1577. Sir Francis Drake circumnavi- gates the globe 1579. Wallenstein born 1583. Raleigh plants a colony in Virginia 1584. Richelieu born 1585. Mary Stuart executed 1587. Sir Francis Drake appears before Cadiz 1587. Defeat of the Spanish Ar- mada, 1588. Battle of Ivry, 1590. Edict of Nantes, 1598. Tyrone's Rebellion, 1598. Expedition of Essex to Ire- land, 1599. Globe Theatre built 1599. Australia discovered 1601.

III.

THE RISE OF THE NOVEL.

FROM the close of the sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth there is a dearth in the department of English prose fiction. This long period of inactivity emphasizes yet more distinctly the wide difference in character between the fanciful creations of the Elizabethan romancers and the more realistic portrayals of the novelists who were yet to be. In Spain the serious romance made some progress, developing slightly through the historical tales which flourished contemporaneously with the pastorals and fictions of low life; in France, also, a number of serious works appeared, the most notable being the "Cassandre," the "Cléopâtre," and the "Pharamond" of La Calprenède (1602-1663), and the "Grand Cyrus" of Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701); but nothing of this kind is to be found in England. Between the literatures of the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries there, two literary epochs intervene, — the one dominated by the spirit of Puritanism, the other characterized by the license of the Restoration. It was the age of Milton and Bunyan on the one hand, of Butler and Dryden on the other; it was also the day of Wycherly and Congreve, and the crew of lesser Restoration dramatists. Two women, Mrs. Manley and Mrs. Aphra Behn, produced a few mediocre novels in the latter portion of the century; but these were rather contributions to the vicious product of a degraded and unblushing public taste than to the progress of their art. There was, however, one work which helps to bridge the gap of this seventeenth century; and this work was a product of Puritanism.

**The
Seventeenth
Century.**

The "Pilgrim's Progress" of John Bunyan (1628-1688) is an allegory; but it is so true to human nature, so full of human experience, that really it marks a great stride forward. The fictions of Elizabeth's day were confessedly fictions of the impossible; here was a fiction of reality, although the fictitious character of its machinery was not disguised. Here man contended, persevered, and triumphed. He was beset by the same difficulties, the same demands, the same temptations that all men experience. Doubting Castle, the Slough of Despond, Vanity Fair, — we all of us know these places; they seem more real to us than do Arcadia or Arden, even though they be likewise allegory. John Bunyan, rough vagrant tinker that he had been, unlearned but for the homely wisdom of the Scriptures and that inborn genius for the comprehending of humanity that Chaucer and Shakespeare had before him, — John Bunyan, reprobate but converted, dreamed in the little room at Bedford Jail a dream that made his prison a classic place, and gave England of the seventeenth century its one true picture of human life and human victory. We cannot doubt that many a devout Puritan of Bunyan's day, with head bent over the record of Christian's falls and Christian's triumphs, whispered softly to himself, as tears rolled down his cheeks, "It is I, it is I!" One step more, and but one step, was needed to usher in the novel; that was to drop the allegory, and to paint men and women in the relations familiar to us and amid the surroundings of the world wherein we live.

If the seventeenth century appears remarkable for its lack of interest and effort in the art of fiction, the eighteenth is as certainly distinguished by most notable beginnings and achievements in that field. The novel differs very materially from the unreal, fantastical creations which absorbed the interest of Queen Elizabeth's subjects, and helped to satisfy the extravagant appetite of that romantic and exuberant age. The English novel, which takes its rise in the eighteenth century, is a picture of life, a story of manners; sometimes a narrative of adventure, more often a record of domestic experience, with its daily events of joy or sorrow, its failures and successes. In its

**Bunyan's
Pilgrim's
Progress.**

The Novel.

highest development, the novel presents to us not a mere succession of incidents, but an accurate study of character: it may develop extreme ingenuity and dramatic intensity of situation and of plot; but it must not depend upon this alone for its interest, and there are obvious bounds of probability and taste which must not be transgressed. As was natural enough, there were many experiments in this particular field before the story-teller acquired the insight and the art to produce the perfect novel: there are those who claim to-day that this art and this perfection have been attained not even yet, and that the true painter of life and men is still to come.

It is a rather singular circumstance that we have in our literature one well-drawn character — fulfilling all the requirements of a “study” from the life, one of our important and most classic characters indeed — existing entirely outside **A Fore-runner.** the pages of a novel, a drama, or of any formal fiction. This is genial, worthy old Sir Roger de Coverley, who in the year 1711 strolled into England quietly and unannounced, introduced and hospitably entertained by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. Addison, it is true, produced no novel; he did as great a thing, for he drew a character so strongly individualized, so amiable in its attributes, that it has lived from that day to ours one of the best beloved in English fiction. Thus Joseph Addison may be regarded as at the very beginning of the century suggesting if not inventing the novel form, and as setting a pattern in the portrayal of real character which has rarely been surpassed.

It is an open question whether the title of first English novelist does not belong of right to Daniel Defoe (1661–1731). This man's character in life was so singular and so abnormal that **Daniel Defoe.** some acquaintance with his career is necessary to a real appreciation of his power and place. Defoe was a butcher's son. His father always wrote his name Foe; the son adopted the aristocratic prefix, for some good reason doubtless, and wrote his name De Foe. But the butcher's son entered not ill equipped on his career. He received a good education, was master of five languages, and, better still, was endowed with an extraordinary

degree of enterprise and pluck. His course was one of vicissitudes. In business he was a tilemaker, sometimes prosperous, often in want; at one period he maintained a great establishment, at another he was in hiding from his creditors: however, these are every-day experiences. It was in the field of politics that Defoe was especially distinguished. For his attacks upon the government he was frequently in disgrace; by some clever turn of his pen, as often restored to favor and at times in government employ. One of his pamphlets gave great offence, and brought him to the pillory. Instead of the expected derision and abuse, the populace, whose hearts he had won by the opportune publication of a stirring political ballad, made him their hero, and his exposure was the signal for cheers and flowers and a popular ovation. He became an able journalist as well as a pamphleteer, editing for several years a little paper written and published by himself. A chance imprisonment meanwhile did not interrupt the publication of his sheet, which made its appearance daily from the cell where he was detained as prisoner. In 1704 Defoe began the publication of "*The Review*," at first as a weekly, although it afterwards appeared three and then five times a week. This germ of the modern daily newspaper was political in character, but maintained one department which bore the suggestive title of "*The Scandal Club*." It continued in great favor for eight years, and was doubtless the suggestion, if not the pattern, of the "*Tatlers*," "*Spectators*," and "*Ramblers*" which were so soon to follow. This singular man was shrewd enough to hoodwink all the party leaders of his day; and for ten years contrived to serve a whig government under the guise of a tory, maintaining his connection, unsuspected by the tories, with a partisan paper which he continued to publish in the tory interests, suppressing, however, the more bitter attacks upon the whigs.

From these experiences, Defoe gained a marvellous knowledge of men; in this respect it has been claimed that he surpasses Shakespeare. He had the journalist's faculty for seeing what was of interest to the people, and the skill to stimulate that interest to his own advantage. It cannot be denied that he concocted

news most unblushingly, and that he was an adept in preparing the market for his wares. The notorious Jack Sheppard was tried and held for execution. Defoe claimed to have obtained an interview, and published a highly colored and extremely salable "autobiography," the only authoritative work known! There was a story in circulation about the appearance to her friend of a certain Mrs. Veal who, it was afterwards learned, had comfortably died a few days before. Defoe provided an account of the apparition of Mrs. Veal, as minute in its circumstantial character as any of the veracious productions of this order in our own day. It was reported that a volcanic disturbance somewhere in the ocean had caused the disappearance of a well-known island. Our enterprising journalist was able at once to furnish his startled readers with a full account of all the attending phenomena from the pen of one who had been a spectator of the eruption and its effects. Now these were all clever inventions, yet they read marvelously like truth. But, says the reader, this was lying; why speak with tacit approbation of work like this? For the reason, briefly, that without these steps in Defoe's development we might never have heard of "Robinson Crusoe," or possessed a "Journal of the Plague Year." Without these fictitious narratives in Defoe's broadsides we might have had to wait till later even than Richardson or Fielding for the appearance of the English novel; but now it was close at hand. An English sailor cast away on the island of Juan Fernandez has been rescued and brought home. On this suggestion, Defoe, now in his fifty-eighth or fifty-ninth year, sits down to tell us "the life and strange surprising adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner." Who is there of English-speaking nationality — unless to him, indeed, the significance and the delight of "a story" has been haplessly denied — that has not pored over these same strange, surprising adventures of this famous mariner of York! Within four months the book had reached its fourth edition; and since the day of its appearance its popularity has never waned. In 1720 appeared the "History of Duncan Campbell," the "Memoirs of a Cavalier," and "Captain Single-

The Story-teller.

ton." During the four years following were published, successively, "Moll Flanders," "Colonel Jack," "Roxana." The famous "Journal of the Plague Year," although not a novel like the other works mentioned, belongs to the same period, and is characterized by the same qualities of style and method. In 1731, under obscure and melancholy circumstances, Defoe died, full of years and works. No less than two hundred and fifty distinct publications are attributed to his genius and industry.

What, now, is the secret of Defoe's power, the key to his method? It is his minute attention to detail. He had the

Realism. power as few writers have possessed it of placing himself in the position of the character he was describing and of noting all possible attendant circumstances. Placed thus and thus, he would say, what should I need and how should I provide? And thus he became fertile in expedients. Has any one forgotten the feeling of isolation experienced in common with the shipwrecked sailor, or how we rejoice to the point of exultation upon the successful completion of each trip to the wrecked vessel that adds some new treasure to the equipment of Crusoe's cabin on the uninhabited island? An able critic, William Minto, points out Defoe's discovery that narrative should be plain rather than adorned. He chose the simplest, plainest language at command, and thus he attained "the dulness of truth." This statement is true of all his novels; it will be recognized as pre-eminently true of his most popular as well as ablest work. The "Journal of the Plague" is so circumstantial, and wears upon its pages such an air of truth that it has not infrequently been taken for a *bona fide* diary of the time. Now this is *realism*; and it is this quality of workmanship, possessed by Defoe in such unusual degree, that the critics have in mind when they apply in its technical sense the term *realistic* to some novel of our day. There is no term more often misapprehended or more abused than this term *realism*, and its adjective accompanying. Daniel Defoe was a realistic writer, and his works were realistic, not because many of the narratives were sensational and dealt with types of character that were base and lewd, but because by careful and

skillful use of insignificant details, he made those details appear significant of reality, and succeeded in giving his most startling fictions an air of actuality and of truth. This is what it is to be a realist; and it is noteworthy that our earliest novels were realistic novels. Do not let us forget the true meaning of the term. The realistic quality of a work depends not so much upon the choice of subject as upon the method of treatment. The selection of material and the final effect for good or ill is a matter of the novelist's philosophy; the impression of unnaturalness or, on the other hand, of reality alone suggests the quality of his art. Were these works of fiction novels in the strict sense of the word? If by that term we mean the close and scientific analysis of human character or the artistic portraiture of personages and events dramatic or historic, it is not possible to claim that title for them; but if we admit within the limits of the term studies more or less accurate of special phases of existence and the fictitious narrative of imaginary adventures, then Defoe was a novelist, and "Robinson Crusoe" and "Moll Flanders" are as truly novels as is Richardson's "Pamela" or Fielding's "Jonathan Wild."

Verse has most often been the vehicle by which the satirist has conveyed his censure to public notice, but now and then a great prose satire has found its way into literature, and thus the world has gained another romance. **The Satire in Fiction.** "Gargantua" and "Pantagruel," the grotesque creations of Rabelais, Cervantes' "Don Quixote," are examples in point. No survey of English fiction would be complete without more than mention of the strongest satire in the English language, the great work which we best know by its abbreviated title, "Gulliver's Travels."

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was born in Ireland, although of pure English parentage. His early life was unfortunate in that for a period Swift found himself dependent upon the generosity of others rather than upon his own abilities, which he knew were unusual. **The Author of Gulliver.** He seems to have been by nature unhappy and morbidly self-conscious. Disap-

pointments cluster in his life ; an unfortunate love-episode is commonly assumed to have occurred in his career. At last made Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin, Swift reached the highest material recognition that it was his lot to win, although his expectations and his genius clearly looked to higher attainment. The experiences of life served mainly to imbitter the spirit and to intensify the morbidness of the man, while his peculiarities of temperament and his predisposition to brain-disease were aggravated by disappointed ambition and ill-treatment from those he would have served. As in the case of Defoe, Swift turned his mind to politics, for which he had even a greater genius. Several scathing pamphlets on religious and political questions bore early witness to his power of satire. In 1726 Dean Swift's greatest work appeared, and the world became acquainted with the extraordinary adventures of Captain Lemuel Gulliver, in the light of whose experiences that other distinguished mariner, Robinson Crusoe, was a very common sort of man indeed. In this work Jonathan Swift appears as one of the greatest masters of English we have ever had ; as endowed with an imaginative genius inferior to few ; as a keen and pitiless critic of the world, and a bitter misanthropic accountor of humanity at large. Dean Swift was indeed a misanthrope by theory, however he may have made exception in private life. His hero, Gulliver, discovers race after race of beings, who typify the genera in his classification of mankind. Extremely diverting are Gulliver's adventures among the tiny Lilliputians ; only less so are his more perilous encounters with the giants of Brobdignag ; but we do not quite enjoy the record of his discoveries in Laputa or his revelations from the land of the Houyhnhnms. The bitterness of venom is in these satires. By a singular dispensation of Providence we usually read the *Travels* while we are children ; we are delighted with the marvellous story, we are not at all injured by the poison. Poor Swift ! he was conscious of insanity's approach ; he repeated annually Job's curse upon the day of his birth ; he died a madman. Contributing more than he perhaps intended to the interest in works of fiction, Dean Swift has found

his place, and a not unimportant place, in the history of the evolution of the novel.

We are all familiar with the story of Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), the sedately respectable printer and bookseller, who, oddly enough, when just turned fifty took to writing love-stories; and who in the minds of many is invested with the title of first English novelist, an honor we would dispute in favor of Defoe. To be sure, Richardson did not seize the pen of the story-teller without our being able to account for the seeming vagary; for he had served his apprenticeship in the art just as truly as his predecessor had done twenty years before. That is a very attractive page in the record of our literature which presents to us the portrait of the warm-hearted, romantically inclined young printer's lad inditing, in phraseology worthy the tender theme, love-letters for his girl-friends whose admiration for his epistolary skill and whose bashful confidence in his discretion brought them to him for an expression of the sentiment they would not wholly hide, yet trembled to reveal. It was not unnatural, therefore, that by and by we should discover this practised correspondent consenting "to write a little book of familiar letters on the useful concerns of common life," a work suggested by a brother-publisher. Then it was that Richardson caught the idea of embodying vital interest as well as practical admonition in the execution of the plan; and basing his plot upon the adventure of a young woman in the North, an experience which was actual, he gave to the world in the year 1740 the story of "Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded."

**Samuel
Richardson.**

Pamela.

Defoe had employed in his stories the machinery of a fictitious autobiography. Richardson followed the same method, but threw his material into the form of correspondence. Pamela Andrews, the heroine of his novel, is left, through the death of a good woman who has befriended her, somewhat in the power of her benefactress's son. This gentleman, a type of the fashionable man of the world in that day, makes various assaults upon the honor of the young woman, whose character is most exemplary, and who successfully repulses his advances,

although compelled by circumstances to submit to endless persecution. Finally, however, Pamela's virtue is "rewarded" by the complete conversion of the reprobate "Mr. B.," as he is called, and the offer of an honorable marriage, which the triumphant maiden modestly and joyfully accepts. Sidney Lanier, one of our keenest critics, inquires pertinently, Why not *vice*, instead of *virtue*, rewarded? and thinks that it is Mr. B. who gets the reward rather than the poor pure-minded girl whose life he has made wretched almost to the point of death with his unmanly persecutions. They saw things differently in the middle of the eighteenth century, apparently; and besides it must not be forgotten that novel-writing was in its days of infancy, and that analysis and criticism must not be unduly searching or severe. Along with its uncouthness, moreover, Richardson's novel is not without some excellent features of its own. It is prolix to tediousness, but there is at the same time considerable ingenuity in invention. There is an almost painful elaboration of expression, and the phraseology is stilted, but there is consistency in the portraits, and the attempt at character painting is not without a degree of success. Pamela exerts a steady influence for good, until all about her are converted by the power of her example. The wicked Mr. B. succumbs, and even the notorious Mrs. Jewkes is won to penitence and the path of virtue. It is the fashion to laugh, as Fielding did, at this tedious, moralizing, sentimental story; and yet there is a good deal in it that is both homely and wholesome. Richardson plainly did not possess the art that may be claimed by Fielding or Smollett or Sterne; but he was sincere, and honestly pure in his aim, which is more than can be said of any one of the other three.

Critics have been, as usual, divergent in their estimate of the comparative merit of Richardson's novels. Of those who have found worth in any of his works, some have spoken most approvingly of "Pamela," others have accorded to "Clarissa Harlowe" the foremost place. In this latter novel Richardson describes another contest between vice

Clarissa Harlowe and Sir Charles Grandison.

and virtue. This heroine has to contend against the brutality of her own heartless relatives, who insist upon her marriage with a man whom she detests; her trials are also intensified by the most persistent persecutions of the profligate Lovelace, who is a well-drawn type of the cruelly selfish and licentious man-of-the-world in that day. Of one thing we may well be certain, Richardson's sympathy with womanhood was genuine and intelligent; and his constant recognition of her dignity and her right is worthy of more praise than it has yet received. No wonder that our novelist should have attempted finally to give the world his own conception of what a "gentleman" should be. In "Sir Charles Grandison," the author of "Pamela" and "Clarissa Harlowe," types of womanly virtue and Christian character, paints "a man of true honor" for our edification and delight. "Could he be otherwise than the best of husbands, who was the most dutiful of sons; who is the most affectionate of brothers; the most faithful of friends: who is good upon principle in every relation of life!" Thus exclaims the hero's wife, when at the completion of the story she is rewarded for her virtues by the bestowal of this paragon upon her happy self. The truth is, that with Richardson the purpose was very strong and the art extremely weak; consequently his novels impress us as prosy sermonizing, although his true heart and honest endeavor command our high esteem. "To inculcate religion and morality in an easy and agreeable manner and to make vice odious," — this was the purpose which in the preface to "Pamela" Richardson plainly avowed.

Henry Fielding (1707-1754), whose name is oftenest spoken in close connection with that of his contemporary and rival, Richardson, was a man of very different mold. He was of the aristocracy, had been educated at Eton, and had studied law at Leyden. He was a writer of comic plays; lived a gay, reckless life, and in three years had squandered his own and his wife's property. Although admitted to the bar in 1740, he was never successful as a lawyer. Fielding became a writer to support his family; he became a novelist to ridicule the author of "Pamela." It was natural enough

**Henry
Fielding.**

that Fielding should laugh at Richardson. While lacking the refined sympathy of a thoroughly pure and virtuous character, and hence the ability to appreciate the latter's aim, or to recognize the actual merit of his performance, Fielding did possess the taste of an artist, and the perception to see at once that the stilted heroine, Pamela, and the stiffly moving figures associated with her, while heralded as real, produced the effect of puppets who moved mechanically and awkwardly as the appropriate strings were jerked.

There was something almost spiteful in the suddenness with which he took up the cudgel, and in the scheme which he evolved. "Joseph Andrews" (1742) was begun as a
Joseph Andrews. parody upon "Pamela." In Fielding's story, Joseph is presented as the brother of Richardson's heroine, and is discovered under circumstances similar to those in which the girl was placed, of course with a complete reversal of conditions. Joseph's master has died, and it is the widow who persecutes the young man with her attentions. The story turns upon Joseph's rejection of her overtures, and the various fortunes and misfortunes of the hero until he is happily wedded to the girl of his choice. Fortunately for Fielding's fame as a novelist, he seems to have quickly forgotten his first object, that of ridicule, and to have become honestly interested in the fortunes of his characters. To be sure, he depicted them with all the untrammelled freedom and boisterous rudeness of his day, and, it may as well be added, of his personality. The novel is full of coarseness, and the humor is mainly that of horse-play; but delicate sensibility was not a characteristic of that age, and Fielding doubtless obeyed an important law when he painted things in the colors of his time. This admission, however, does not condone the absolute obscenity which frequently intrudes, with evident relish of design, upon his pages; nor can we forget that Fielding with his laxity was but preparing the way for Smollett and Sterne, in whose hands vice and vileness become not only humorous but admirable.

There are able critics who class "Joseph Andrews" and "Tom

Jones" (1749) as among the best novels ever written. They say that these stories, although blunt and gross, are redolent of nature and reality, that the license is but the frankness of the time, and that the influence of the author, the atmosphere of the scene, are, in design and effect, not immoral, but the contrary; that Fielding, through the faithful realism of his picture, was artistically striving to serve the cause of morality and virtue in his day. But even admitting the obvious injustice of rigorously comparing the morality of Fielding's novels with the standard now demanded of the writers of similar works, we should still be inclined to question the claims made by the more extravagant admirers of the early novelist. There are many novels since Fielding's time which have surpassed his stories in both plot and character delineation. The most enjoyable personality in "Joseph Andrews" is Parson Adams; and Parson Adams is a caricature rather than reality. "Tom Jones" is, confessedly, Fielding's masterpiece; yet, in spite of much inordinate praise, it is, as a novel, by no means beyond the reach of criticism. It is as long drawn out as is "Pamela;" and although the incidents are vigorous and the action brisk, there are several episodes which are entirely superfluous in the development of character or plot: such is the introduction of the elder Blifil, of the truculent Fitzpatrick, and of the eccentric old "Man of the Hill," whose presence in the narrative is utterly unaccountable. There is a singular inconsistency also in the novelist's treatment of his leading character. Theoretically, Fielding denies the existence of the typical hero as commonly conceived, and is, of course, warmly applauded by the great Mr. Thackeray for his opportune discovery; but, as matter of fact, Fielding does make a hero out of Tom Jones, and, from beginning to end, very obviously exalts into heroic attributes the very vices which he politely deprecates and for which he artfully apologizes. The truth is, that while Fielding thus displays the manners of the times, he chooses from preference and sympathy to depict the bad manners of his time rather than the best. Perhaps we need not quarrel with the author's taste: he certainly comprehended life and character, and was in his art, when that

Fielding's
Art.

was at its highest, far in advance of his rival Richardson. The author of "Joseph Andrews" and "Tom Jones" may not be entitled to claim the highest place among the British novelists, but he certainly deserves to rank among the most vigorous and faithful, as he is, doubtless, one of the most popular of English realists. A valuable testimony to the excellence of his artistic insight and his just conception of the novelist's true field of action is afforded in a paragraph of his own occurring in one of the fresh and piquant essays upon things in general, with which, happily, Fielding chose to introduce the successive "books" of his novel "Tom Jones." Fielding therein says:—

"For though every good author will confine himself within the bounds of probability, it is by no means necessary that his characters, or his incidents, should be trite, common or vulgar; such as happen in every street, or in every house, or which may be met with in the home articles of a newspaper. Nor must he be inhibited from showing many persons and things, which may possibly have never fallen within the knowledge of great part of his readers. If the writer strictly observes the rules above mentioned, he hath discharged his part; and is then entitled to some faith from his reader, who is indeed guilty of critical infidelity if he disbelieves him."¹

Since Fielding's day many longer paragraphs have been written on this theme, containing matter less apt and not nearly so true. It is remarkable that the limitations of the modern novel should have been so clearly and truthfully formulated at so early a stage in its development.

In "Jonathan Wild" (1743), Fielding was working along the old line of Defoe. "Amelia" (1751), the novelist's last work, is intended as a portrait of Fielding's first wife, whom **Other Works.** he had loved devotedly, and for whose loss he remained inconsolable until not long after her death, when he married her maid.

In the works of Smollett and Sterne we find the novel in a sense degenerate. It has fallen from the level where Richardson had placed it, and where by Fielding, even, it had been maintained; instead of depicting life as it was or might be, these writers

¹ Tom Jones, book viii. chap. i.

simply catered to the demand for amusement, and amusement of that sort furnished by impossible heroes who are profligates, and who engage in adventures which are brutal and licentious. Such are the viands served in the works of **Smollett and Sterne.** Tobias Smollett (1721-1771), a Scotch surgeon, who turned novelist with the publication of "Roderick Random" in 1748. His other works are "Peregrine Pickle" (1751), "Count Fathom" (1754), "Sir Launcelot Graves" (1762), and "Humphrey Clinker" (1771). There is no great character in the whole collection; perhaps not one that has found a place of permanence in literature. The case is somewhat different with Laurence Sterne (1713-1768). Sterne was an Irishman, and an officer in the army; later, he entered the Church, and became Prebend of York. Indeed, he published six volumes of sermons which were considered edifying by polite society of the time; but Sterne was, nevertheless, a sad example to the world at large, for he was as incorrigible a rogue as any one in the gay life about him. Laurence Sterne was a born humorist, but his humor was the humor of whimsicality, and at times his oddity grows wearisome. He is too artful to be sympathetic, and his artifice is too obvious. Besides, he is over-fond of innuendo; slyly playing back and forth, he now pretends an innocence more impertinent than diverting, and now suggests that his reader is deeper in the mire than he is; always exhibiting a genius in the art with which he stimulates the latent wickedness whose presence in weak human nature this worldly Ecclesiastes understands all too well. It hardly need be said that it is not for his sermons in six volumes that we remember Laurence Sterne. His two works, "Tristram Shandy" and "The Sentimental Journey," are the memorials which keep his memory green. The latter of these two productions is merely a sketchy account of a supposititious journey over the usual continental route of that day, interlarded with bits of sentimental pathos and apparent sensibility, which Thackeray, in his "English Humorists," rightly characterizes as artificial and insincere. It is in no sense a novel, although intended as an essay in delineation of character.

“The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman” (1759-1767), a cleverly constructed series of eight volumes (originally nine), details with great accuracy and minute circumstance the incidents attending the nativity of the gentleman whose autobiographical idiosyncrasies we are supposed to be enjoying. The affectation of ingenuity, and the very pertness of the narrative at last become wearisome ; while the humor, which is genuine enough, is vitiated by the vulgarity and the indecency of its allusions. The use of *double-entendre*, of coarse word-play, of pure obscenity, in fact, becomes so frequent and so elaborate that its lack of spontaneity makes intolerable what, in works of that period, is sometimes condoned because of its naturalness and robust vivacity. The hero of the novel, if novel it may be called, presumably the “Gentleman” whose name adorns the titlepage, does not appear in his own proper person throughout the length and breadth of the entire nine volumes. There is, however, some capital character painting in the work. Mr. Shandy, father of the hero, is exceeding real ; Dr. Slop, although bordering upon the verge of caricature, possesses an individuality of his own ; while the character of Uncle Toby stands out immeasurably above and beyond all the rest, not merely for the consistency and clearness of the portraiture, but for the very loveliness of the conception, which goes far to atone its author’s faults and to stamp him the genius that he undoubtedly was. Uncle Toby and his body-servant, Corporal Trim, who is as much a part of Uncle Toby as is the latter’s wig or stick, belong to the great character portraits in our gallery of English fiction.

“My uncle Toby was a man patient of injuries ; — not from want of courage ; — I have told you in a former chapter ‘that he was a man of courage ;’ — nor did this arise from any insensibility or obtuseness of his intellectual parts ; — but he was of a peaceful, placid nature, — no jarring element in it, — all was mixed up so kindly within him ; my uncle Toby had scarce a heart to retaliate upon a fly.

“Go, — says he one day at dinner, to an overgrown one which had buzzed about his nose and tormented him cruelly all dinner-time, — and which, after infinite attempts, he had caught at last, as it flew by

him; — I'll not hurt thee, says my uncle Toby, rising from his chair and going across the room, with the fly in his hand, — I'll not hurt a hair of thy head: Go, says he, lifting up the sash, and opening his hand as he spoke, to let it escape; — go, poor devil, get thee gone, why should I hurt thee? — This world surely is wide enough to hold both thee and me." ¹

Seven years before the completion and publication of "Tristram Shandy," there stole quietly into the ranks of English fiction a book more notable and more important far than that of Sterne in its influence upon the modern novel. **The Vicar of Wakefield.**

All the world, at least the literary part of it, knows how the manuscript lay gathering dust in Goldsmith's table-drawer until brusque old Dr. Johnson — himself the author of a didactic novel, "Rasselas," which had appeared two years before — fished it out and stood godfather for it at the publisher's. "Our first genuine novel of domestic life," as Craik truly calls it: indeed, there is nothing to dispute its title. The story is a somewhat sentimental one, there is less of realism here than in "Tom Jones" or "Joseph Andrews;" for Oliver Goldsmith was a poet, and commonly idealized. "The Vicar of Wakefield" is significant of a new stage in the history of the English novel. Thus does the historian Lecky, in his "History of European Morals," refer to the fiction of the period already described: —

"The character of the seducer, and especially of the passionless seducer, who pursues his career simply as a kind of sport, and under the influence of no stronger motive than vanity or a spirit of adventure, has been glorified and idealized in popular literature of Christendom in a manner to which we can find no parallel in antiquity. When we reflect that the object of such a man is by the coldest and most deliberate treachery to blast the lives of innocent women, when we compare the levity of his motive with the irreparable injury he inflicts: and we remember he can only deceive his victim by persuading her to love him, and can only ruin her by persuading her to trust him, it must be owned it would be difficult to conceive a cruelty more wanton, and more heartless, or a character combining more elements of infamy

¹ Tristram Shandy, book ii. chap. xii.

and of dishonour. That such a character should for many centuries have been the popular ideal of a considerable section of literature, and the boast of numbers who most plume themselves upon their honour is assuredly one of the most mournful facts of history, and it represents a moral defection not less than was revealed in ancient Greece by the position that was assigned to the courtesan.”¹

In Goldsmith's novel the coarseness, the brutality, the indecency which characterized the works preceding it have disappeared ; a cleaner and sweeter atmosphere is felt, and the existence of a new and truer artistry is revealed.

¹ Lecky's *History of European Morals*, vol. ii. pp. 346, 347.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BRITISH NOVELISTS.	OTHER BRITISH AUTHORS.
Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, 1719. Defoe's Duncan Campbell, 1720. Defoe's Memoirs of a Cavalier, 1720. Defoe's Captain Singleton, 1720. Defoe's Moll Flanders, 1721. Defoe's Colonel Jack, 1721. Defoe's Journal of the Plague, 1722. Defoe's Roxana, 1724. Defoe died 1731. Richardson's Pamela, 1740. Fielding's Joseph Andrews, 1742. Fielding's Jonathan Wild, 1743. Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe, 1748. Smollett's Roderick Random, 1748. Fielding's Tom Jones, 1749. Fielding's Amelia, 1751. Smollett's Peregrine Pickle, 1751. Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison, 1753. Smollett's Count Fathom, 1754. Fielding died 1754. Sterne's Tristram Shandy, 1759. Richardson died 1761. Smollett's Sir Launcelot Graves, 1762. Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield, 1764. Sterne died 1768. Smollett's Humphrey Clinker, 1771. Smollett died 1771. Goldsmith died 1774.	Addison died 1719. Sir Isaac Newton died 1727. Steele died 1729. Congreve (last of Restoration I atists) died 1729. Jonathan Swift, 1667-1745. Gulliver's Travels, 1726. Samuel Johnson, 1709-1784. Dictionary, 1755 Rasselas, 1759. Hume, 1711-1776. Gibbon, 1737-1794. Bishop Butler, 1692-1752. William Paley, 1743-1805. Adam Smith, 1729-1790. Burke, 1730-1797. Fox, 1749-1806. Sheridan, 1751-1816. <i>Poets.</i> Alexander Pope, 1688-1744. Translation of Homer, 1715-1720. Essay on Man, 1732-1734. Edward Young, 1681-1765. Night Thoughts, 1742-1745. James Thomson, 1700-1748. The Seasons, 1726-1730. William Collins, 1721-1759. Thomas Gray, 1716-1771. Elegy in a Country Church, 1751. Oliver Goldsmith, 1728-1774. The Deserted Village, 1770. William Cowper, 1731-1800. The Task, 1785. Thomas Chatterton, 1752-1770. William Blake, 1757-1827. Robert Burns, 1759-1796. Wordsworth was born 1770.

LITERATURE AND POLITICS.

FRANCE, GERMANY, AMERICA.	HISTORICAL.
Molière died 1704. Jean, 1711. Melon (Télémaque, 1698), 1715. Sage (Gil Blas, 1715-1735), 1668-1747. Montesquieu, 1689-1755. Voltaire, 1694-1778. J. Rousseau, 1712-1778. Diderot, 1713-1784. Crèvecoeur, 1749-1791. Pierre (Paul et Virginie, 1787), 1737-1814. La Fayette, 1732-1799. Schlegel, 1700-1766. Goethe, 1724-1803. Schlegel, 1724-1804. Schlegel, 1729-1781. Herder, 1744-1803. Schiller, 1759-1805. Goethe, 1749-1832. Part I. Wilhelm Meister, 1795. Cotton Mather died 1728. Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758. Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790. Thomas Paine, 1737-1809. Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1826. Alexander Hamilton, 1757-1804. Philip Freneau, 1752-1832. El Barlow, 1755-1812. Charles Brockden Brown, 1771-1810. Wieland, 1798.	Queen Anne reigned 1702-1714. George I. reigned 1714-1727. George II. reigned 1727-1760. George III. reigned 1760-1820. Louis XV., King of France, 1715-1774. Louis XVI., King of France, 1774-1793. Maria Therese, Empress of Austria, 1740-1780. Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, 1740-1788. George Washington, 1732-1799. Catherine II., Empress of Russia, 1762-1796. Charles XII. of Sweden died 1718. South Sea Bubble, 1720. Peter the Great died 1725. Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1723-1792. Captain Cook, 1728-1779. Handel's Messiah, 1741. Lisbon Earthquake, 1755. Hogarth died 1765. Stamp Act passed 1765. Napoleon and Wellington born 1769. English Journals started 1771. Partition of Poland, 1772. James Watt perfected Steam-engine 1773. American Independence, 1776. Peace declared 1783. Mail-coaches in England, 1784. French Revolution, 1789. Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette guillotined 1793. Robespierre guillotined 1794. Cotton-gin invented 1793. Haydn's Creation, 1797.

IV.

THE PERFECTION OF THE NOVEL.

FROM the moment that the genial Vicar of Wakefield and his sentimental, not altogether respectable contemporary, Mr. Tristram Shandy, entered the domain of fiction, at or about the year 1760, no other personage appeared to dispute their entire pre-eminence therein until in 1814 Sir Walter Scott began to introduce his people to the world. Of course there were novels and novelists in the interim, and various creatures of fiction, with varying degrees of pretension to public notice; but there are few whom the world recalls to-day, and absolutely none who have bequeathed a general reputation to posterity.

From Goldsmith to Scott.

Delineation of character is the supreme test of a novel's claim to regard. Accuracy in that particular is vastly better than mere ingenuity of plot. Any writer, after his apprenticeship, can invent action, but only the few can create men and women. So true is this of all the past that out of the mass of pages so industriously piled up even to the present day, we find comparatively few which record the lives and fortunes of beings actually real and human — but it is these few which have survived: the rest are dead, if we can thus refer to offspring which came lifeless to the birth. Put the immortality of these shadowy men and women to the test. Whom do you know the better, the author or his people? Tom Jones, Robinson Crusoe, — do we not recall the character before we recollect the author? More people have heard of Tristram Shandy than of Laurence Sterne; we are every whit as familiar with the embarrassments of Dr. Primrose as with the per-

Character-painting in Fiction.

plexities that harassed the amiable Doctor by whom he was created. On the other hand, Fanny Burney and Horace Walpole we know excellently well; but who were Evelina and Cecilia, and who in the name of all the famous is the Knight of the Gigantic Sabre? Many have read the essay on Madame d'Arblay who have not ventured to open either one of her two principal novels. To be sure, this reasoning must not be pushed too far, for there are accidental and adventitious circumstances which very often enter into the account, although in the main the principle holds true.

Three distinct tendencies are manifest in the fiction written between Goldsmith's day and Scott's, — the sentimental, the ultra-romantic, and the moralizing. Sterne's influence is obvious enough in "The Man of Feeling," written by Henry Mackenzie in 1771. It is so fragmentary and so sketchy that only by courtesy can it be called a novel. Yet in this almost planless work a portrait in profile is fairly drawn of a man with responsive, impulsive nature, quick in sympathy, unpractical in action. This sentimental spirit was born of continental influence. It was the age of the Revolution, and the youthful ardor of England now and then found its vent in both poetry and prose.

The Novel of Sentiment.

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!"

Rousseau was the hero among *littérateurs*, and only three years after this Goethe's admirers were weeping over the misfortunes of Werther. The most recent editor of Mackenzie's work has considerably supplied an index to the emotions of the hero, so that, if inclined, the sympathetic reader may turn immediately to the pages wherein the "man of feeling" is depicted "sobbing," or "choked in utterance," or "blubbering like a boy;" if one has the hardihood, he may indeed behold this sensitive being "bursting" with grief, and on one occasion fairly disappearing in a "shower of tears." But Henry Mackenzie's "Man of Feeling" is to be remembered for one passage if for no other,

and for an epitaph as neat and happy as ever crowned the effort of a better wit : —

“ ‘ I should like,’ said Harley, taking his [the ‘stranger’s] hand, ‘to have some word to remember so much seeming worth by : my name is Harley.’

“ ‘ I shall remember it,’ answered the old gentleman, ‘in my prayers, mine is Silton.’ And Silton indeed it was ! Ben Silton himself ! Once more, my honored friend, farewell ! — Born to be happy without the world, to that peaceful happiness which the world has not to bestow ! *Envy never scowled on thy life, nor hatred smiled on thy grave.*”¹

Among the writers of this group, following Mackenzie, and more ardent in his revolutionary sympathies, William Godwin was most prominent, who in 1794 wrote the novel “Caleb Williams,” perhaps the most widely read fiction of that time.

Foremost in the romantic school of that day were Horace Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe. “The Castle of Otranto,” written by the former in 1765, was so far beyond the bounds of reason as to have suggested, and not unplausibly, ^{The} ~~Romance.~~ that its author, a man of taste and leisure, had intended his production as a satire rather than a novel. Howbeit, we have here a tale of sights and sounds uncanny ; dismal corridors echo to unearthly groans ; portraits speak ; underground passages form an important part of the machinery of the plot. The prominent characters of the tale disappear mysteriously, and as unexpectedly reappear. There is in the castle courtyard a gigantic helmet whose black plumes nod ominously when messengers approach the place. Such are the expedients herein employed to aid the plot of cruel persecution and innocent passion to an appropriate end. The effect is rendered more discordant than is necessary by the attempt to invest these scenes and the characters engaged in them with all the reality possible through detailed description and contemporary attributes. Had this action but been relegated to the shadowy lands where such events are presumed more credible, the story would not be the mass of ridiculous incongruity it is.

¹ The Man of Feeling, chap. xxxiii.

A stronger work than Walpole's romance is the "Vathek" of William Beckford. "The History of the Caliph Vathek," as its full title reads, is yet more grotesque and wilder in **Vathek.** its freaks of fancy than is "The Castle of Otranto;" but its Oriental setting, its remarkable likeness to some tale among the thousand and one of the "Arabian Nights," above all, its consistency in the fantastic character assumed and the extraordinary imaginative power of its author, have given to this tale a popularity and a length of life shared by no other of the grotesque romances of this period. "Vathek" reappears regularly in edition after edition, delighting lovers of the marvellous in fiction to-day as it did a hundred years ago. William Beckford, a youth of cleverness and of wealth, composed the work apparently for his own amusement, at the age of twenty-two. He claimed that it was the product of a single effort, completed at one sitting, although the sitting was explained as having continued through three days and two nights; but this account is now known to be as fanciful as are the scenes described in the tale itself. Careful preparation and an elaborate composition preceded the appearance of the romance. The book was written in French while Beckford was travelling on the Continent; and although an English translation was published without permission in 1784, it was in 1787 that the author's first edition appeared at Paris and Lausanne.

Under the influence of the "Mysteries of Udolpho" written by Mrs. Radcliffe in 1794 — and very neatly satirized by Jane Austen in "Northanger Abbey" not long after — **"Monk"** **Lewis.** Matthew Gregory Lewis wrote "The Monk." Lewis was wise enough to discard the childish bugaboos of Otranto, and to finally explain his mysteries, or at least suggest an accounting therefor in his closing chapter. "The Monk" (1796) was written before its author had attained the age of twenty; and so powerful was the impression made by it that its writer has been known as "Monk" Lewis from that day to this. Lewis was full of the German influence of his time, — that of the romantic school, just then in its greatest pride. He had met

Goethe, and had translated Schiller's "Kabale und Liebe" for the English stage. He wrote "The Castle Spectre," a musical drama, and an opera entitled "Adelmorn the Outlaw." One of his best novels was "The Bravo of Venice," published in 1804.

"It was evening. Multitudes of light clouds, partially illumined by the moonbeams, overspread the horizon, and through them floated the full moon in tranquil majesty, while her splendour was reflected by every wave of the Adriatic Sea. All was hushed around; gently was the water rippled by the night wind; gently did the night wind sigh through the Colonnades of Venice.

"It was midnight; and still sat a stranger, solitary and sad, on the border of the great canal. Now with a glance he measured the battlements and proud towers of the city; and now he fixed his melancholy eyes upon the waters with a vacant stare. At length he spoke:—

"'Wretch that I am, whither shall I go? Here sit I in Venice, and what would it avail to wander further? What will become of me? All now slumber, save myself! The Doge rests on his couch of down; the beggar's head presses his straw pillow; but for *me* there is no bed except the cold, damp earth! There is no gondolier so wretched but he knows where to find work by day and shelter by night — while *I* — while *I* — Oh! dreadful is the destiny of which I am made the sport!'

"He began to examine for the twentieth time the pockets of his tattered garments. 'No! not one paolo, by heavens! — and I hunger almost to death.'

"He unsheathed his sword; he waved it in the moonshine, and sighed, as he marked the glittering of the steel.

"'No, no, my old true companion, thou and I must never part. Mine thou shalt remain though I starve for it. Oh, was not that a golden time when Valeria gave thee to me, and when she threw the belt over my shoulder, I kissed thee and Valeria? She has deserted us for another world, but thou and I will never part in this.'

"He wiped away a drop which hung upon his eyelid.

"'Pshaw! 't was not a tear; the night wind is sharp and bitter, and makes the eyes water; but as for *tears* — Absurd! my weeping days are over.'

"And as he spoke, the unfortunate (for such by his discourse and situation he appeared to be) dashed his forehead against the earth, and his lips were already unclosed to curse the hour which gave him being, when he seemed suddenly to recollect himself. He rested his

head on his elbow, and sang mournfully the burthen of a song which had often delighted his childhood in the castle of his ancestors."¹

What heroics ! what rubbish ! But there is more than this in Lewis's "Bravo." He contrives to make his hero respected, even admired to a degree ; and artfully employs the poetry and witchery of Venice, that unique city in the world, — half land, half sea, — to give a tinge of appropriateness and even congruity to his wild romance. The "Bravo" is as good a specimen of the improbable and yet conceivable as any work of fiction earlier than Scott.

The moralizing school found its best exponents in Jane Austen (1775-1817) and Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849). The admirable Irish tales by the latter, as well as her "stories of fashionable life," the "popular tales" and the novels of "Leonora," "Patronage," and "Belinda," are extremely entertaining and at the same time faithful pictures of real life, freed from the sentimentalism of the one school and the romantic unrealities of the other. These stories were told with a moral purpose in view, yet that purpose was maintained unobtrusively, and the interest of the tale was paramount.

By far the most clever novelist of her day was Jane Austen (1775-1817). The life of this gifted woman was most simple and most quiet. Her home was a village rectory in Hampshire; her only dissipation an occasional stay at the fashionable watering-place, Bath. No notable incidents appear to have broken the calm current of her daily life ; no serious romance is known to have absorbed her mind. Quietly as she lived she wrote : her intimate friends were hardly aware of her occupation or her power. And it is a very quiet phase of life that Jane Austen has described, although her art is such that the most commonplace scenes appear eventful and the commonest characters important. No one since Fielding and Sterne had displayed such power as was hers in the realistic touches which exhibit character ; but the material which supplied

¹ The Bravo of Venice, chap. i.

Miss Austen with her creations was widely different from that which furnished the earlier novelists with theirs. The most sensational occurrence in her pages is an elopement which ends with a due respect for the proprieties. The moral purpose is strong in Jane Austen's work. "*Pride and Prejudice*" (1813),¹ "*Sense and Sensibility*" (1811), are her two most ambitious novels, and the titles are suggestive of the lessons they inculcate. The story is always told straightforwardly, and rarely drags; the author possesses a modest knowledge of the world, and allows a frequent dash of satire to give some piquancy to her descriptions. "*Northanger Abbey*" (1818) is written quite in the spirit of banter, and the humorous misadventures of the romantically inclined young heroine are shafts capitally aimed against the tasteless romances of the "*Udolpho*" type. Miss Austen was a most minute observer: microscopic is the word to be used of her method in observation and in treatment. With painstaking accuracy each detail of every process is described. Modest she was in all things, — yes, but not mediocre. Sir Walter paid her a remarkable compliment: "That young lady has a talent for describing the involvements of feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big bow-wow strain I can do myself, like any now going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me." So far as this applies to Jane Austen, Scott's words are eminently true. Besides the works already mentioned, Miss Austen wrote also "*Mansfield Park*" (1814), "*Emma*" (1816), and "*Persuasion*" (1818). "*Pride and Prejudice*" is universally conceded to be her ablest novel. These stories were published anonymously, and although the secret of their authorship leaked out, they were never avowed by Miss Austen as her work. Their real merit was not generally appreciated until after the early death of their author, but the fame which came so tardily shows no sign of waning. Next to Scott, there is no author of that time whose works, so unlike those of

¹ Dates of publication are here given.

the great romanticist, are so generally familiar or read with so much real appreciation to-day as quiet, homely, wholesome Jane Austen.

That was indeed an era of feminine activity in story-writing. Fanny Burney had become famous by the publication of "Evelina"

The Women Novelists. in 1778, and her "Cecilia" and "Camilla" had followed in 1782 and 1796. Real novels of fashionable

life these were, reflecting the manners of the time, although coarse in expression and often indelicate in incident as they seem to the occasional reader of to-day. In 1791 "A Simple Story" by Mrs. Inchbald had appeared, and "Nature and Art" in 1796. It was in 1794 that Mrs. Radcliffe's "Mysteries of Udolpho" was published, and that fantastic fiction had been preceded by "The Sicilian Romance" in 1790. At the time that Mrs. Edgeworth was elaborating her tales of Irish life, Jane Porter was inditing "Thaddeus of Warsaw" (1803) and "The Scottish Chiefs" (1810); while Susan E. Ferrier's "Marriage" followed in 1818, and "The Inheritance" in 1824. This was all preparing the way, as it seems, for the appearance some years later of the remarkable work of another woman, the "Jane Eyre" of Charlotte Brontë; and, what is more important still, it was possibly influential in the development of a genius which, by the publication of "Scenes from Clerical Life," in Blackwood's Magazine, in 1857, was to carry a woman's name to a place among the novelists not only higher than that as yet attained by any of her sisters, but so high as to endanger the laurels of all story-tellers from Defoe's day to her own. An honorable list, certainly, that of these women novelists, deserving more attention and a larger notice than is possible here. To the best of these novelists, far more than to Richardson and Fielding or Goldsmith, does the present generation owe in its perfection the "novel of manners," so called, that realistic delineation of the affairs of common life which forms the most popular class in the fiction of to-day.

But now we are in the very age and glory of English fiction. To record the progress of the novel from genesis to climax is comparatively easy; to pass opinion upon all the host that follow is

beyond the scope of this present work : it is only typical figures, the leaders among story-tellers, that we can now consider.

The romantic school attained its highest level in the works of Scott (1771-1832). We all of us know how with his taste for the patriotic, the picturesque, the romantic, the young poet caught the echo of old Scottish border songs, and sang them over again in the first metrical romances that had been heard in Britain since the days of Chaucer ; and we know, too, how easily and naturally, when he fancied it was time to leave that field to another, Sir Walter passed from the lays of the minstrel to the records of a chronicler, and told in an historian's prose and with almost an historian's fidelity the stories of Rob Roy and Ivanhoe, of Amy Robsart and Effie Deans, of Sultan Saladin, and the rest of that goodly host well known to all. With no attempt at moralizing, wishing only to amuse and entertain, this "wizard of the North" but waved his wand, and the national pageant of England and Scotland moved upon his pages : Britain in the era of the Conquest ; the intrigues and the revels of the Elizabethan court ; the struggles of Round-heads and Cavaliers. Anon we hear the tramping of the Crusaders as ponderous armies toil their discordant way to the Holy City ; or listen to the border war-cries when canny Scotsmen rise from out the gorse and heather to defend their rugged hills from invading foes. Old Edinburgh, mediæval Paris, the London of a dozen epochs, Scotland, England, France, and Palestine, — countries, peoples, scenes, and characters are all described so vividly that we see them well, and with the truthfulness of environment and habit. Truly the romantic novel, the novel of history, could reach no higher point ; the stories of Sir Walter marked the climax of attainment, and heralded the decline.

Nor must we fail to notice our own "American Scott," James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), who with the self-same taste for the romantic and the picturesque, and with a patriotism every whit as ardent, recorded the adventure and romance of the American sailor and the American Indian. Very far removed from the realism of the

**The Roman-
tic Novels
of Scott.**

**James
Fenimore
Cooper.**

present day are these novels of Cooper, "The Water Witch," "The Red Rover," "Wing and Wing," "Pathfinder," "Last of the Mohicans," and the rest; yet they are by no means characterless. Redolent of ocean and of forest, breezy with the bracing winds of the prairie, these scenes become endowed with life through the art of a true story-teller; their world is not wholly fanciful or unreal.

The works of Captain Marryat and Samuel Lover require at least a reference, for the boys who read with delight the stories of Leatherstocking and Long Tom Coffin contrived somehow to make acquaintance with Peter Simple and Handy Andy and Mr. Midshipman Easy. To the generation of yesterday at least, these personages are almost as classic, if not quite so classical, as their predecessors. Though more careless in language and less discreet of demeanor, they linger nevertheless in affectionate memory along with the heroes of Cooper and Scott.

Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton (1805-1873) told the same romantic tales with a trifle less of skill and more of clatter than did Scott; while here at home Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) wrote romances of a different and a higher order. He explored the secret recesses and recorded the experiences of human souls, and made for himself a name above all those who have been tellers of stories here. Unconsciously he took his place, too, as the last, for the present epoch, of the great romancers, American or British.

Some allusion seems here appropriate to those verse fictions which have now and then found their way into modern English literature. Reference has been made already to the retelling of the Arthurian tales by Tennyson in his exquisite "Idylls of the King;" somewhat of the same type are the romantic narrative poems of Swinburne and William Morris, the latter of whom has succeeded admirably not only in reviving the material of old Teutonic days, but in suggesting by the manner of the tale with wonderful vividness the very life and spirit of the past. The earlier works of Scott, his "Lay of the Last Minstrel," "The Lady of the Lake,"

**Marryat and
Lover.**

**Bulwer-
Lytton and
Hawthorne.**

**The Modern
Metrical
Romance.**

and "Marmion;" the familiar series by Lord Byron, "The Giaour," "The Bride of Abydos," "The Corsair," "Lara," and the rest, are, however, more essentially in the mold of the ancient metrical romance than the group first mentioned. Campbell's "Gertrude of Wyoming," Longfellow's "Hiawatha," and his "Evangeline" may also be regarded as illustrations of the poetical romance. But of more particular interest to the student of modern fiction are such stories in verse as Mrs. Browning's "Aurora Leigh" and Owen Meredith's (Lord Lytton) "Lucile." These last are very much like novels, though told in measure rather than in prose. They differ from the true metrical romance in some important respects: there is far greater distinctness in detail, the vagueness, the breadth of epic treatment is not seen; there is a degree of idealization inseparable from truly poetic handling, but there is closer conformity to the truth of nature, of human nature especially; moreover action in the narrative is held subordinate to motives, incident to character.

And now a word needs to be spoken regarding that remarkable triumvirate of genius who placed the English novel almost where Shakespeare put the English drama, and left immortal characters behind them, not alone for English folk to know, but to delight the readers and lovers of stories the whole world through.

First there was Charles Dickens (1812-1870). Readers of "David Copperfield" recall brief glimpses of the harsh experiences that fell in Dickens' childhood, — the early surroundings of poverty and want; the wretched life in the London streets; the cruel environment of the debtor's prison; the dismal days of toil in the blacking-factory. Pleasanter is it to recall the subsequent advances, and especially one scene in the crowded Strand, — a scene which brings the great novelist nearer to us perhaps than almost any other recorded incident of his career. With all the hopes and all the misgivings of a young writer just making his first timid venture upon the sea of literary effort, Dickens, one day, shyly and by stealth dropped his first manuscript into the letter-box of a publisher. Upon the day of issue, the young contributor buys a copy of the magazine

Charles
Dickens.

upon the street. He scarcely dares to open the cover. So nervous is he that it is a little while before he succeeds in finding the table of contents; but when at last he discovers therein the title of a certain sketch by "Boz," the sensitive, emotional spirit of the man is not to be restrained; ashamed to meet the curious eyes of the crowds about him, Dickens plunges into the nearest doorway to sob out for a moment an emotion too acute to be concealed. Perhaps it was this quick responsive sensibility in Charles Dickens that brought him now and then so dangerously near the verge of sentiment of a baser sort; and this quality it is, perhaps, which explains, or in part accounts for, the fact that no one of the great novelists arouses so strong partisanship in readers as the author of *Pickwick*, *David Copperfield*, and *Little Nell*. It is customary to insinuate that Dickens' world of fancy is manifestly distorted and unreal, and it is needless to deny that there is frequent exaggeration both in sentiment and outline; yet Dickens' characters are not always so unreal as critics claim. His eye was quick to see that one peculiar trait in mental or moral make-up which made men individual, original, and stamped them "characters." This oddity of temperament was to the novelist as obvious and insistent as any eccentricity of motion or accident of physique which excites our laughter, awakens pity, or rouses our disgust. The painter of *Uriah Heep* and of *Quilp* shaded heavily and made a daring use of intense tints; but what are plausibly described as caricatures by one man are unexpectedly approved as portraits by another. It is not long ago that a literary man of note declared in public that upon a recent stroll down Piccadilly whom should he behold advancing toward him in the very guise of forty years ago, but Bob Sawyer arm in arm with Mr. Wilkins Micawber! The humor of Dickens is almost always a phase of the grotesque, and his pathos is often that of excessive sensibility; but it is manifestly an injustice to dub the author of *Little Emily* a mere caricaturist, and a strangely unappreciative taste which finds the world of Dickens' fancy only unnatural and unreal. Quite outside of any discussion of his merits and artistic rank as novelist, but nevertheless of direct interest to novel-readers, is the

fact, abundantly demonstrated, of the remarkable popularity of this author. There are no works of fiction to-day so widely read and so widely sold as are the novels of Charles Dickens. With the publishers of standard fiction he has no real competitor.

By the side of Dickens stood William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863), who wrote, perhaps, with a sharper pen than his brother novelist, and who through his benignant-looking spectacles peered into the follies and shams of a social life a little removed in its sphere from that which Dickens noted. Not always so genial, not always so radiant, he told the story of *Vanity Fair*, and drew the pictures of the snobs who throng its avenues and crowd its booths; yet this keen-eyed philosopher saw both sides of life, after all, and painted the pleasant and the lovely as well as the exasperating and melancholy. Thackeray wrote most naturally with the pen of the satirist, and sometimes in those odd never-to-be-forgotten sketches gave us what, as in the case of Dickens, the critical mass with their wise discernment label "caricature;" but the world has since discovered that the writer of "*Pendennis*" and "*Esmond*" did have an artist's eye to reality in his effects; in complete sympathy with his chosen master, Fielding, Thackeray made a bold stand upon the principle of human nature even in the personalities of fiction. No man is a perfect hero, said he, and, however dismal the doctrine, no woman always a heroine. Hence his characters, his principals, have severally the fallibilities and frailties which we commonly look to find in the life of every day. Thackeray was no hero-worshipper in either the domain of romance or the social world of real men and women among whom he lived; he was the sworn foe of all pretence and sham, and possibly enjoyed over much the process by which hypocrisy was stripped of its disguise and vice punished publicly with the stinging whip of satire. Yet Thackeray was not a cynic; he has indeed by not a few been honored with the title, suggesting their affection, of "England's *gentlest* satirist."

With the publication of "*Adam Bede*" in 1859 and of "*The Mill on the Floss*" in the following year, George Eliot (Mary Ann

William
Makepeace
Thackeray.

Evans-Cross, 1819-1880), took her place at the head of living novelists in her day. Dickens had painted objectively, but as he saw his men and women he made them over again to **George Eliot**. emphasize the character he had found. George Eliot's people were never made: they were born like mortals. Personality existed in them, and their author gave them an essence, as no writer excepting Shakespeare had ever done; with the development of this strong personality, moreover, there existed also a power of expression rivalled only by that of the great dramatist himself. Her humor is inimitable; it is natural and genuine, and nowhere in her pages are we jarred by the intrusion of the grotesque or the unreal; here all is intensely human, with the unity of nature and its calm. But there is a third respect in which this woman novelist surpassed her predecessors, and won a place in the domain of story-telling which has not yet been wrested from her. Thomas Carlyle is quoted as saying with reference to the somewhat rugged and depressing period of his residence at Craigenputtoch: "It looks to me now like a kind of humble russet-coated epic, that seven years' settlement at Craigenputtoch, very poor in this world's goods, but not without an intrinsic dignity greater and more important than then appeared." This striking phrase, "a russet-coated epic," has been seized by Sidney Lanier, one of our American critics, and is adapted and applied by him, in his appreciative and acute remarks upon George Eliot ("The English Novel," page 192), to the subject of our present consideration. This is the element which gives George Eliot's work its highest claim to our regard; what she depicted was not only real, it was inspiring. The commonplace, the humdrum, the usual experience of the vast majority of humanity, — these she interpreted; and her merit was that she revealed in such environment the possibilities and actualities of latent heroism. She wrote the "russet-coated epic" of common life, and tacitly taught the inspiration of the universal struggle upwards towards the attainment of high ideals. There is a heaviness of melancholy vaguely perceptible in the minor tones of all her works; to one familiar with the story of her life-

experience this seriousness of tone is comprehensible. The stress of her own experience, and the inevitable trials of her chosen situation added, beyond a doubt, to the intelligence of her conceptions and the intensity of her feeling, while the intuitive optimism of her nature bade her proclaim the gospel of a triumphant perseverance rather than the hard doctrine of despair. Regarded as subjective embodiments of wholesome ideas, and considered technically as objective pictures of life and manners, George Eliot's novels surpass all other English fiction in their fidelity to what we may call the true realism of humanity; and with that distinction granted, they may rightly claim the place of honor among the novels. Thus, a trifle more than a hundred years after the appearance of "Pamela" and "Tom Jones," and almost a hundred years after the creation of Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," in the varied work of these three writers, the English novel may be said to have reached its climax.

V.

TENDENCIES OF TO-DAY.

CHARLES LAMB once said, in that familiar witty way of his, that when a new book came out he read an old one. Perhaps this might be not a bad rule for the story-lovers of our own day to follow. Happy indeed may that one account himself who, by chance or foresight, finds that he has a few of those classic works of the generation past still treasured up unread ; truly unfortunate is the fate of those young people of to-day who, swamped by the flood of contemporary fiction, find little or no time in which to become acquainted with the great masterpieces of fifty years ago. This certainly seems very much like a suggestion that there are now in the field of English fiction no writers worthy to compete with those of yesterday. Not altogether that, perhaps ; and yet in some of the qualities and characteristics of the works concerned, the suggestion of such comparison may be justified in fact. The list of popular living novelists, both British and American, is so large and so familiar that it would be both tedious and unnecessary even to name them. Better is it to discuss more in the abstract certain peculiarities and tendencies in the fiction of to-day, with such helps through illustration as may be gained from some prominent writers who may be taken as typical, and influential among the rest. It is important as well as interesting to note that fiction is at present more international in character than it ever has been before. We are more generally familiar with foreign literature now than were our fathers. Translations without number and even editions in the original not a few have given us acquaintance with the leading novelists of Russia, France, and Spain, of Germany and Scandinavia, Holland and Hungary ; while

**The New and
the Old.**

Italy and Greece, not yet so open to us as the rest, are but awaiting their turn, doubtless, to be introduced to the cosmopolitan world by and by. Meanwhile one notable result of this widespread interchange in products of this class is the development of a general tendency in fiction and the evolution of a "school" which is more evident and more dominant among us than was true in the days of Scott, or in those of Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot. The novelist of the day is always a philosopher, and his view of life is apt to be a sombre not to say a pessimistic one.

The action and reaction of literary influences at home and abroad have been more than once referred to in these pages. During the first half of the present century the influence of our English Scott and Byron was strong in the poetry and fiction of France. Victor Hugo (1802-1885) and Alexandre Dumas (1803-1870) were the most prominent of the school. In 1831 appeared "*Notre Dame de Paris*," and "*Les Misérables*" in 1862. "*Monte-Cristo*," the most familiar to us of Dumas' romances, the titles of which are almost innumerable, was published in 1844. George Sand (1804-1876) had written "*Consuelo*" and "*La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*" during the forties. Her rustic romances were written at the very middle of the century. The romanticists, under the rule of these great leaders, dominated French fiction until a comparatively recent date. They have been almost as familiar to readers of English novels as have Scott and Cooper themselves. Since their day a new school of novelists has claimed the stage, — a school which numbers its representatives in every European state and in England and America as well. The school of modern realism looks for its model back to another great French story-teller of the first half of the century, Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), a contemporary of Hugo and Dumas, having some qualities common to them, but distinguished from them by closer fidelity to nature, and by his bold attempt to depict the actual life of every class composing the structure of French society in his time. Balzac, author of the "*Comédie Humaine*," as he entitled the tremendous series pro-

**The French
Romances.**

jected in his plan, was the father of the modern realists. Foremost of living representatives of that school are Zola, Ibsen, and Tolstoi.

Count Léof Tolstoi (born 1828), conspicuous among the novelists of Russia, is the author of "Sevastopol," "The Cossacks," "Peace and War," "Anna Karénina," "Ivan Ilyitch," "Family Happiness," a score of short stories, tracts, autobiographical sketches, and — "The Kreutzer Sonata." A painter of strange fresco pictures is Tolstoi. The drawing is very bold, the effect is startling. He is a master of realism, no one can question that. This artist in words has painted battle pictures where the smoke, the din, the red blood, the mortal horror of war roll forth on his pages as nowhere else except upon the canvas of his countryman Verestchagin; and the latter has done with his brush what Tolstoi accomplished with his pen. "Anna Karénina" (1877) is a great novel of social life; one of the very few great works of fiction in our day. In spite of a sort of crudity, which possibly is itself an element of vigor, the work is great in conception and powerful in its effect. *Is it real*,—this world into which we are unceremoniously introduced? No one with a degree of insight into the social life of the Continent will doubt the fidelity of the portraits drawn by Tolstoi. It is a hard, sad world he shows us, clouded over by selfishness, hypocrisy, passion, despair; but we cannot fail to recognize in time the individualities that seemed at first so grotesque and so deformed. We must admit that this is but the nakedness of truth. And here is "Ivan Ilyitch," a strange and grewsome story of a man who is slowly dying; and a hundred pages detail the process of his death. Read "Ivan Ilyitch," and you will know how dissolution, slow, relentless, goes on in a living man until the death-rattle sounds. But you will learn more than this, for with microscopic exactness you will have watched the development, career, and end of a self-worshipping, materialistic aristocrat. The book is the accurate study of a type, and is oppressive with reality. "The Kreutzer Sonata" (1890), the last of Tolstoi's works to attract general attention in America, was received with

surprise, and greeted with an outburst of indignant criticism. And yet it was but the legitimate outcome of Tolstoi's mental obliquity. It is the confession of a madman to which the author invites us to listen. The method is the same, that of an intense realism; but the words of the madman, Posdnicheff, a murderer and a lunatic self-confessed, are the words, the sentiments, the belief of Tolstoi, the author of Posdnicheff; and they are the words of fanaticism or insanity, however real and true to life the situation may appear to be.

Next comes Émile Zola (born 1840), leader in the school of realism, or, better, *naturalism*, as he prefers to have it called, in France. "L'Assommoir" was the work which introduced **Émile Zola**. Zola generally to our acquaintance. Here there was no concealment, no skilful draping of the vicious or the horrible: everything was realistic to the point of nakedness. "I designed to draw the Paris workman," said Zola; and he drew him and all his environment with him. Almost the first scene in the book is a realistic picture of a brutal hand-to-hand fight between two women of the lower class. They meet at a public wash-house on the Seine; they drench each other with pails of water; they scratch; they pound each other with their clubs; they tear each other's clothing; the bare flesh shows. Women stand about, and men, gloating. Coupeau, the principal character in the story, dies at last of delirium tremens. Shut up with him in the padded cell at the hospital, we see the hideous dance, and have to hear his frantic howlings. His besotted wife looks on with maudlin curiosity and then goes tottering home to die, her body being found some days afterward, putrefying under the area stairs. This is horrible, too horrible to be preserved in literature, but we are compelled to give reluctant assent to the awful realness of these scenes: we can only wonder at the relentless and terrible power which thus affects us. The whole story presents a tragic picture of a drunkard's progress, drawn with a greater mastery than was ever shown by Hogarth. The works of Zola need not be catalogued in these pages. The novel which last excited criticism here, though not the latest story from his pen, was "La

Terre." What was then said intelligently in its condemnation was not too severe: it is brutal and obscene. And yet it is a master's hand that paints these coarse pictures, and there is no reason why they should not be conceded to present what it is claimed they do, — a perfectly faithful copy of the existence of a degraded peasantry, and also, incidentally, a glorification of "La Terre." Zola loves the earth; he never tires of calling our attention to the smoking fecundity of the soil; he revels in it; he touches the theme with the spirit and the instinct of a poet. Nature, the Earth, — it is typical of himself.

Let us turn for a moment away from these realists of St. Petersburg and Paris. Let us look toward the north. And what a relief it is, — to emerge from the crowded salons of the Russian, the social circles where brutality and vice go masked, from the heated poisonous atmosphere, the mockery, the heart-ache; away from the reeking wine-shops of Paris, the close dens where vice throws off its mask and rules riotously and wantonly. The madman's howling, the shrieks of women being murdered, echo in our ears. But here the salt air of the wholesome sea breathes in our faces. We look across the fields to where the ocean beats calmly on the sands; it is the noise of his waves which strikes restfully on our ear, and nothing more harsh than the scream of sea-birds comes to disturb our peace. Mists rise over the water; the sun fills the world with its shining. Men and women come and go in all the vocations followed by honest men and women. They toil on land and sea; they fish, they plant, they trade. It is a healthy life; these are bright, happy, honest people. We observe few drunkards, the thieves are less numerous than the trustworthy. We discover that we are in a world where there is more of aspiration than of degradation, where good is stronger than evil, where right knows how to conquer wrong. This is the world which Björnson (born 1832) and his compatriot, Jonas Lie (born 1833) have revealed to us in their romances of Norse life and manners. These northern stories are refreshing: "Arne," "The Fisher Maiden," "Synnöve Solbakken," "The Barque Future," "The Pilot and his Wife."

**The Northern
Romanticists.**

In spite of defects in construction, in spite of the persistence of the idyllic in their pictures of men and women, possibly because of this last-named peculiarity, we enjoy this world of homely folk, its purity, its vigor, its healthful atmosphere.

Did the scope of our essay permit, it would be a pleasure to discuss in detail the method and purposes of another writer, who, though not a novelist, must be reckoned third in this trio of the great realists: the Norwegian dramatist, **Henrik Ibsen.** Henrik Ibsen (born 1828). When Ibsen's social dramas appeared first in Norway and Denmark, then in Germany, at last in England and America, they excited more comment and provoked more discussion than the novels of Tolstoi or those of Zola. Indeed these plays of Ibsen are more like novels in their method than any form of the drama hitherto familiar to us. They are social studies; and although Ibsen is the fellow-countryman of Björnson and Lie, the philosophy embodied in his work is as cynical and sombre as that of the other two is bright and reassuring. Here is a man, a stranger among us, ill at ease and out of sorts; not at all in sympathy with the general spirit of our institutions, or the thought of the present time. He looks upon society with much the same eye as Tolstoi; and with all the boldness and unconventionality of the Russian, together with a realism more minute in its regard to analysis and detail, Ibsen draws the characters of his social dramas, and with wonderful skill paints the world as he finds it. Where Lie and Björnson idealize, Ibsen satirizes; but his realism is employed, as is that of Tolstoi, in unmasking selfishness and sham, not in disgusting minutiae of misery or vice.

Thus we now have the three great realists of the day, — the Russian, the Frenchman, the Norwegian. Not only are these three writers typical of this tendency in all the literatures of our time, representing, each in his place, **The Methods of Realism.** popular studies of general phases in national character and life, but they are also commonly acknowledged to be the great masters in this movement toward what is called fidelity to truth, or, technically, realism. What, now, is to be

said of their principles, their methods, their aims, — what, in brief, of realism: is it to be commended or condemned; is it to remain with us; will it exalt our literature, or, on the other hand, rob it of what vitality it still retains?

Carlyle, in his essay upon Diderot (1833), says: —

“Were it not reasonable to prophesy that this exceeding great multitude of novel-writers and such-like, must, in a new generation, gradually do one of two things: either retire into nurseries, and work for children, minors, and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes; or else, what were far better, sweep their novel-fabric into the dust-cart, and betake them with such faculty as they have to understand and record what is *true*, — of which, surely, there is, and will forever be, a whole Infinitude unknown to us, of infinite importance to us! Poetry, it will more and more come to be understood, is nothing but higher Knowledge; and the only genuine Romance (for grown persons) Reality.”

**A Prophecy
of Thomas
Carlyle.**

This prophecy is verified; and Mr. Howells, the leader of the realistic school among American novelists, commenting sympathetically upon it, observes: —

“For our own part, we confess that we do not care to judge any work of the imagination without first of all applying this test to it. We must ask ourselves before we ask anything else, Is it true, — true to the motives, the impulses, the principles that shape the life of actual men and women? This *truth* which necessarily includes the highest morality and the highest artistry, — this truth given, the book cannot be wicked and cannot be weak.”¹

**W. D. How-
ells upon
Realism.**

Reality is certainly the demand of the age. Now, let us ask, do our great realists give us reality? In the paragraph upon Defoe it was noted that the epithet “realistic” as there used was intended to suggest actuality and lifelikeness secured by a careful and minute attention to details. As expressed by one critic, the very dullness of the narrative confirms the impression of its truthfulness. In the application of this term to-day, the technical meaning of

**Significance
of the Term
Realism.**

¹ Editor's Study, Harper's Monthly, April, 1887.

the word "realism" is subordinated to a broader and more popular one. Yet in the narrower sense of the word, Tolstoi and Ibsen and Zola are as thorough and painstaking realists as was Defoe; in point of accuracy and the recording of details apparently insignificant, they surpass him. Used in its broadest sense the word "realism" to-day implies the character of a novelist's philosophy as well as indicates the nature of his method. A word upon its significance in this direction is therefore necessary.

The mission of the novelist is to picture life, — life in some special phase, in some type-form, if he pleases, but ever with due regard to the artistic finish and effect. Nor may it be forgotten for a moment that the artist who constructs a drama or a novel, is largely an impressionist, while the impression, the effect, produced by the work as a whole, and lingering in the mind of the spectator or the reader, is a thing for which the artist is responsible. Whatever we may say concerning the place of a purpose in works of art, and however much we may claim a standard of criticism that shall be un-moral, it remains obviously just to hold the artist rigorously to his own standard of integrity; therefore we may well insist that the realist shall give us something more than sensationalism, that there must be accuracy and fidelity in his picture, and that the impression he conveys shall be an honest one, and reflect life as it really is.

**Limitations
of the Novel.**

In the world good and evil are pretty generally mingled. Is there any type in the common life we meet that is altogether good, without a taint of evil in its nature? Some of our writers in romantic fiction apparently believe so, at least they try to suggest such un-human types in their insipid story-books. The realist gives us no such prodigies in his studies: he paints only what he finds. On the other hand, does unmixed evil walk abroad? Do fiends assume human shape, and do lust, cruelty, and hate become incarnate? Here is a test for one's philosophy. Granted that there be such monsters, is it best to see them, hear them, live with them? This will disclose your taste. The case has been put in its two extremes:

**A Fault of
the Realists.**

imagine all gradations, and we notice that the realism of a writer depends much upon his *Lebensanschauung*, his way of looking at life, the world, the men and women in it. One novelist-philosopher may see the brightness, the happiness, the successes, the awards: but, "No," exclaims another, "that's a dream, a fancy; you idealize, we want reality; show us things as they really are." To this the first may very properly and naturally reply by demanding why it is not real. Surely the existence of virtue is not to be altogether denied; happiness is sometimes found; men may prosper righteously at times; the world is not all misery and doubt and gloom. Now, as regards the work of this triumvirate of realists once more: while no question of their accuracy in delineation is suggested, their novels must stand for what they are, — the faithful presentation of certain pitiable phases, classes, individuals; not studies of life as a whole, in its vast extent and infinite variety. We are ready to acknowledge an even microscopic fidelity to the type selected; but when Zola or Tolstoi or Ibsen says, "See! this is life, this is society, here is the boasted institution you call home, thus is the relation of man and woman," we reply with emphasis that that is false. They have not drawn our home, and their society is not the group of people whom we happen to call friends: *some* home, possibly; a certain corner of society, no doubt; and that there are such people to be found, yes, quite a number of them, very likely; but not all are of this sort. And thus, with an authority as unimpeachable as that of these cynical philosophers, the optimist may with much reason claim that the realists, so called, either have made a sad mistake in their estimate of the world at large, or else are wilfully perpetuating a slander and a lie. Very close, indeed, is the relation between the novel and the novelist's philosophy. The cynic will find his theme in what another man would disregard; the pessimist will seize a motive that is sombre. Yet no one will deny that such selection has its legitimate use, and may under appropriate conditions prove a means of good. Once upon a time, not so very long ago, a novel was written in this country by an American woman: a book neither vicious nor disgusting, yet

claiming to be realistic, and, it happened, constructed with a purpose. That book was intended to depict a gigantic evil: it assumed to reveal to the people of the North the real condition of the negro at the South. If it failed in its realism, that was a defect; at all events, it fulfilled its mission.

And thus in the case of our three great realists of to-day. Here is Tolstoi: he sees a worldly, sensual, hypocritical habit of life. He is himself the very contrast of all this, honest, religious, ascetic. He dwells upon these evils until he becomes morbid and fanatical if not insane. He says: "I'll show them what their life really is," — and so he writes "Ivan Ilyitch" and "The Kreutzer Sonata." Tolstoi is not to be unreservedly condemned. His sincerity of purpose, his deep conviction, his complete renunciation, his absolute devotion to his stern ideal, — these have no parallels in our day. The more he is read the greater does admiration grow. This man, laboring like some disabled Titan caught in the meshes of a strange fanaticism, this Count Léof Tolstoi, self-deposed, is to-day the most remarkable figure not alone among literary workers, but absolutely in society and politics as well as art. We do not comprehend Tolstoi until we read his wonderful little gospel tales; while "My Confession" is indispensable as a commentary to "The Kreutzer Sonata." And here again comes Ibsen, more misanthropic than Tolstoi, for his experience has been such as to confirm the feeling and intensify it. In his turn he plans to hold the mirror up to Nature, show vice its image, rouse men from their self-complacency; and he constructs his "Comedy of Love" and "The Doll House." Has Zola also such a motive, such a plea? Perhaps. Paris, France, is flooded with romantic novels. The gay, sensuous life of the boulevards and the Jardin Mabille is glorified in the creations of Murger and his disciples. Vice is gilded; the disaster and the ruin are carefully concealed. "La Vie Bohème" is the ideal of the hour. "Out upon it!" exclaims Émile Zola; "behold your Paris as it is." It is unjust to censure these great masters blindly: if they have erred, we must first find the point where they went astray.

**A Privilege of
the Realists.**

Were it not for the length of the selection, there might be introduced just here an extract from the work of another contemporary Frenchman, a novelist of wide repute. That selection would comprise the wonderfully pleasant chapter in which Alphonse Daudet (born 1840) so gracefully admits us within the peaceful, happy circle of that home in the Rue St. Ferdinand, and allows us there to make acquaintance with the "Joyeuse" family. It is as if our old friend Dickens were at our elbow again, pointing out with that so genial humor and the sentiment so contagious, fellow mortals whose oddities we must smile over, while our hearts grow tender toward them for their virtues and their weaknesses as well. It is true that Mr. Henry James has said that the intrusion of this entire episode which recounts the fortunes of the family "Joyeuse" is the one defect in the remarkable novel which Daudet gives us under the title of "The Nabob" (1877). And Mr. James is too authoritative a critic that we should dispute his dictum — but, nevertheless, we are very glad that our French story-teller has given us to know the eccentric M. Joyeuse and his three charming daughters, and very grateful that he introduced these cheery, amiable folk directly into the midst of that same story of the Nabob. For in the pages which precede and follow the idyllic picture of this pure and healthy home-life, Daudet has chosen to paint realistically enough the follies, the deceptions, the cruelties of gay and heartless Paris; but all through his story there runs, like a bar of golden sunlight streaming out through a cloudy sky, this recognition of the other side. The hero of the novel, Paul de Gery, has come unexpectedly upon these sacred precincts; has come as a bearer of good tidings to people in distress. It is but a glimpse which he has caught — a parlor table, books, papers, skeins of thread, a bevy of bright, sweet, girlish faces looking up curiously from their employment and the big lamp shedding its warm radiance upon the group. De Gery has fallen among them weary, heartsick at the hollowness of the Paris he has come to know. This is a contrast so complete, so reassuring, that his very bewilderment becomes enchanting.

**The Point
of Error.**

"There was here for De Gery an entirely new Paris, courageous, domestic, very different from the one he already knew, a Paris of which the newspaper reporters never speak, and which reminded him of his province with an added refinement, a charm lent by the surrounding bustle and tumult to the peaceful and frugal retreat."¹

Here is the secret. It is not only a perfected art that puts Alphonse Daudet far above Ohnet, De Maupassant, Zola, and the other realists, great and small; it is because he has this wider vision, and paints the good as well as the evil, the pure and happy as well as the vile and wretched. Daudet is not a follower in the school of naturalism, but he is a truer realist than those who are. Even Zola says admiringly: "Benevolent nature has placed him at that exquisite point where poetry ends and reality begins;" and Henry James himself applauds the dictum, adding: "Daudet's great characteristic is this mixture of the sense of the real with the sense of the beautiful."² Why then need our American critic object to the "Joyeuse" episode in "The Nabob"? Will he suggest that it is not beautiful, or that it spoils the symmetry of Daudet's plan? Surely he will not question its reality: for we are all becoming rapidly convinced that there is another Paris than that which we have been taught to know, a Paris of which the newspaper reporters never speak. And what is here shown of the other side of this Parisian life is only typical of all the variety and aspect of the wide world around us.

This will be the realism of the future. Along with the careful noting of details, the patient study and accurate analysis, the fidelity to nature, the lifelikeness, men will recognize the reasonableness of a philosophy which admits the authority of this larger view. The realism embodied will be that of one who has the power to enter into the life of the character he paints, to become identified with its inner spirit, its weaknesses, its failures, and also with its struggles and its strength. In his choice of theme, the realist of to-morrow will be guided by the general need. Sometimes he will draw a repulsive

**The Realism
of the Future.**

¹ The Nabob, chap. v.

² Partial Portraits, p. 208.

picture if it be necessary to startle or disgust us with a revelation of some abuse to be corrected, or some great wrong which demands relief. But oftener he will introduce "the other side," because it has the power to stimulate and inspire. Hope is stronger than fear. The story of a victory is more effective than the record of defeat. Shall we find such themes in real life, will it not spoil the realism to tint it thus with ideality? There was a painting greatly talked about not long since ; heralded everywhere as a masterpiece of realistic art. Is the "Angelus" any wise defective in its realism because it depicts the two bent peasant figures at the moment when the prayer-bell sounds, — because a sentiment of aspiration, a lifting up of the rude natures, is discernible amid the darkening shadows? It is certain that the picture would not have charmed us more, probably it would not have impressed us as a whit more realistic, had Millet seen fit to paint his peasants fighting or carousing at a boorish village festival. We may speak of the unmoral character of art as profoundly and insistently as we please ; and Mr. Howells may reiterate his statement, — "*this truth given, the book cannot be wicked and cannot be weak*" : it will nevertheless remain a fact that responsibility lies with the painter or the novelist for the theme each chooses, and for the method of the treatment. Fidelity to nature is not the only test of good art ; nor can we think this is precisely what Mr. Howells wished to say. Brouwer and Van Ostad and Teniers and Jan Steen may evoke a lurking smile as we watch their grotesque, indecent merry-makings ; we may call it realistic, very ; but after all we are conscious of a higher art than this. We may prefer some of those earlier pictures even, stiff, conventional perhaps, but with a soul of some sort that illuminates and transfigures. Now, if we can keep the soul and still be true to nature in color and in drawing, we shall achieve the art we seek ; and we shall find that the result is beautiful as well as true. There is more than technique in a painting as there is more than correct versifying in a true poem ; there is, too, something besides mere accuracy of reproduction in a great novel. Thus with our realists, while the power of each is such that we can but wonder and admire, we are

at the same time conscious of a higher art than theirs. There are principles of beauty and of truth which do not find a place in their conception of humanity, or their theory of life, however real a copy of individuals and types their work may appear to be.

In a very important respect, therefore, the novel of to-morrow will surpass the study of to-day. We shall recognize the fact that it is not a product of mere mechanical construction, but that it is a work of art, subject to the same conditions and the same tests which apply to other art

**The Novel a
Work of Art.**

products, whether presented to the mind through ear or eye. Our novelists have gained indisputably as regards accuracy and fidelity in their study of types; they have as certainly lost in artistic taste and power. The older story-tellers were masters of dramatic situation, of a sentiment that colors and enlivens, and of what the painter, perhaps, might describe as "composition," — an instinctive selection and tasteful grouping of incidents and characters that satisfy our intuitions of the attractive and the fitting. Moreover, many of the novelists of yesterday, the great ones of the craft, were masters of expression; and it is notorious that to-day even the most prominent of our workers in fiction are careless and slovenly in their workmanship, and apparently oblivious to the demands of good style. Particularly have defects of this kind marred the compositions of our American representatives in the realistic school. The work of W. D. Howells and Henry James, leaders in this group of writers, has been widely criticised, and justly, for an evident lack of a naturally dramatic spirit. Their stories are trivial and commonplace, not in the sense of dealing with the every-day event and the every-day man and woman — George Eliot's novels do that — but in the sense that they fail to depict anything of particular importance in the life of the every-day man or woman. They lack vigor of combat and struggle, and mere newspaper records seldom attain the dignity of being recognized as art. Mr. James has more to answer for in this regard than has Mr. Howells, whose characters, as in stories like "A Modern Instance," "The Rise of Silas Lapham," and "The Quality of Mercy," do appear now and then in stress-

ful situations, giving us incidents and experiences which by nature are dramatic and legitimately of interest to every lover of mankind. The novels of both writers are marvellous examples of close observation and microscopic analysis; but, unhappily, Mr. James has impressed his readers with the feeling that the life of his characters has been fairly analyzed away. He has lost his appreciation of dramatic effect, whatever may be said of his taste for the picturesque and the artistic. And so with the host of minor writers, who with remarkable evenness in ability plod away patiently and conscientiously on realistic lines. Their philosophy, in the main, is saner and more wholesome than that of the continental realists; but in the matter of artistry Zola and Tolstoi are far in advance of our own leaders.

There are already signs of a general breaking away from the stricter traditions of the realists. While there is no disposition,

**A Change
in Taste.**

apparently, to return to the precise methods of Scott and Hugo, of Cooper or of George Sand, there is at the same time a tendency to introduce idyllic coloring here and there, which may be evidence of a quickened perception that there is need of this artistic quality so long absent from our work. Not only are there men like Robert Louis Stevenson and Conan Doyle, by whom the story-telling art seems to have been inherited with much of the vigor and spirit of the past, but other writers who are following the example of Thomas Hardy and Mrs. Humphry Ward, foremost among English realists; these last-named novelists have certainly developed more of the dramatic in their compositions than have their American contemporaries, their great admirers. The writers of short stories, in both England and America, are showing the effect of this tendency in the admirable quality of their work. No one desires again the precise forms and molds of the old-school romances. Not only has the fashion of the ultra-heroic gone by, together with the philosophy of an infallible readjustment, which shall bring material prosperity in the end to virtue and beauty in distress, but a fashion more true to nature, and a newer and truer philosophy of the realities of human experience and the highest

good, are ready to come in. We cannot go back to the days of chivalry or the realms of fairy-land when story-telling for Carlyle's "grown folks." And this will ever be the glory of the realist of to-day; he has brought us out of the enchanted woods of romance, and set us with our faces toward the world of real things in which we properly belong. Whether our taste shall call for stories that amuse, or studies that instruct; whether the fiction of the future is to develop oftenest the novel of recreation or the novel of purpose, one thing is certain, our readers will in all cases demand the counterfeit presentment of the truth, portraits of humanity, and not grotesque creations of a dream. The realist of the present, like many another innovator, has wrought with crudeness and with inexperience, as well as with sincerity and vigor; he has been erratic sometimes, and now and then there have occurred some shocking violations of good taste. Possibly the extremely "practical" character of the time in which we live has debased the quality of his art, as the strongly materialistic sentiment of our day has undeniably impressed its stamp on our philosophy. Novel-making has grown to be a somewhat mechanical trade of late, and men have wrought stories, as they weave fabrics or work in metals, for the money in it. It is not among such scribblers that the great novelist is born; when *he* comes, he will be recognized. Present-day realism, moreover, is not a climax; it is only an episode in the history of fiction, the natural sequence of the romantic craze which ruled the first half-century. It has deteriorated in most respects from the standard set by Thackeray and George Eliot; but that is due not so much to different methods as to dearth of genius in applying them. In its turn a new and better phase will be developed, not one whit less realistic; on the contrary, far more instinct with life and humanity than now. Moreover, it will attain the place of a work of art; it will be beautiful as well as true.

VI.

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE AND READING.

THE following list of books is by no means exhaustive, but is intended to suggest reading that will be helpful, and contains those works which are generally accessible as well as valuable for reference.

For information concerning the early English story-tellers, consult Ten Brink's "Early English Literature," Stopford Brooke's recent volume bearing the same title, and early volumes in the series entitled "English Writers," by Henry Morley. Refer also to Green's "Short History of the English People" and Freeman's "Norman Conquest." Jusserand's "English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages," "Social England" (a series of valuable essays compiled by H. D. Traill), and "Chaucer's Canterbury Tales" ("with illustrations of English life in Chaucer's time"), by John Saunders, are valuable for reference upon manners and customs. Read "Ivanhoe."

Upon the times and people of Elizabeth's reign, read Creighton's "Age of Elizabeth" (Epochs of History series), and Goadby's "England of Shakespeare." For general reference, use Burkhardt's "Renaissance," Froude's "History of England," and Green's "Short History." Read Taine's "History of English Literature" and Saintsbury's "Elizabethan Literature." On Lyly and the Euphuists, consult Minto's "Manual of English Prose Literature." Jusserand's "The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare" will be found of particular value in the study of this period. Scott's "Kenilworth" and Kingsley's "Westward Ho" depict scenes and characters of the time. In the encyclopædias, particularly in the "Britannica," will be found many articles of

interest and value bearing upon the literature of this age. Editions of the romancers are rare, and outside the works referred to, there are not many books of biography or criticism which deal directly with the story-tellers of Elizabeth's day. The standard editions of their works are those by Edward Arber, Edmund Gosse, Alexander B. Grosart, and David Laing. Ticknor's "History of Spanish Literature" is our best authority upon the romances of Spain, and Sismondi's "Literature of the South of Europe" will be found of value in a study of the Spanish and Italian literature of this period.

Eighteenth-century England has been graphically described by Lecky, in his "England of the Eighteenth Century," and by W. C. Sydney, in a recent work, "England and the English in the Eighteenth Century." "The History of English Thought," by Leslie Stephen, and Lecky's "History of European Morals," will be of use. "Eighteenth-Century Literature" is the title of a volume by Edmund Gosse. Various studies of the fiction of this period and of the periods following have been made by different writers; prominent among these are the following: "A History of English Prose Fiction," by B. Tuckerman; "British Novelists and their Styles," by David Masson; "Novels and Novelists of the Eighteenth Century," by William Forsyth; Dunlop's "History of Fiction;" Jeaffreson's "Novels and Novelists;" Hazlitt's "English Novelists;" G. Birkbeck Hill's "Writers and Readers;" "The English Novel," by Sidney Lanier; and appropriate chapters in Thomas Sargent Perry's "English Literature in the Eighteenth Century." Taine's chapters upon the novelists are also invaluable. A useful and valuable aid to the student is W. M. Griswold's "Descriptive Lists of Novels," classified by nationality, locality, and kind, with criticisms from contemporary journals. Read Thackeray (in "English Humorists") upon Addison, Steele, Swift, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and Goldsmith. Augustine Birrell has some bright essays on Richardson, Swift, and Sterne. For criticism upon style consult Minto. Lives of Addison, Steele, Defoe, Fielding, Sterne, Goldsmith, Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray are

included in the English Men of Letters series. Lives of Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, Smollett, Goldsmith, Scott, Marryat, George Eliot, Jane Austen, Thackeray, are found in the Great Writers' series. In the "Century Magazine" for July, 1893, is an article by Mrs. M. O. W. Oliphant upon "The Author of 'Gulliver ;'" in the September, 1893, number of the "Century," one by the same writer, upon "The Author of 'Robinson Crusoe.'" In "Scribner's Magazine" for September, 1893, is a paper by Austin Dobson, entitled "Richardson at Home." The standard authority upon Scott is the life of that writer by his son-in-law, J. G. Lockhart. The authoritative biography of Charles Dickens is the work by John Forster. Our best record of George Eliot is found in the "Life and Letters," edited by her husband, J. W. Cross. For information regarding recent French novelists, consult the late encyclopædias. "French Poets and Novelists," a series of essays, by Henry James, will be of particular service ; and "Famous French Authors," papers by Gautier and De Mirecourt (translated by Francis A. Shaw), Worthington, New York, 1879, if accessible, will be of use. Several small volumes of criticism have been recently published by writers who are themselves novelists ; among these are "Criticism and Fiction," by W. D. Howells ; "The Novel : What It Is," by F. Marion Crawford ; and "The Experimental Novel, and Other Essays," by Emile Zola.

A recent volume dealing with the Russian novelists is "Russia : Its People and its Literature," by Emilia Pardo Bazán (translated by Fanny Hale Gardiner), A. C. McClurg, Chicago.

Consult also "The Great Masters of Russian Literature," by Ernest Dupuy (translated by Nathan Haskell Dole), Crowell, New York, 1886.

ONE HUNDRED WORKS OF FICTION

Which, for one reason or another, are quite worth reading.

1. Morte d'Arthur (about 1470) Sir Thomas Malory
2. Robinson Crusoe (1719) Daniel Defoe, 1661-1731
3. Vicar of Wakefield (1766) Oliver Goldsmith, 1728-1774
4. Sense and Sensibility (1811) Jane Austen, 1775-1817
5. Pride and Prejudice (1812) " "
6. Waverley (1814) Sir Walter Scott, 1771-1832
7. Guy Mannering (1815) " "
8. The Antiquary (1816) " "
9. Old Mortality (1816) " "
10. Rob Roy (1817) " "
11. Heart of Midlothian (1818) " "
12. Bride of Lammermoor (1819) " "
13. Ivanhoe (1819) " "
14. The Abbot (1820) " "
15. Kenilworth (1821) " "
16. Quentin Durward (1823) " "
17. The Talisman (1825) " "
18. The Spy (1821) James Fenimore Cooper, 1789-1851
19. The Pilot (1824) " " "
20. Last of the Mohicans (1826) " " "
21. The Pathfinder (1840) " " "
22. The Deerslayer (1841) " " "
23. Wing and Wing (1842) " " "
24. Peter Simple (1833) Frederick Marryat, 1792-1848
25. Mr. Midshipman Easy (1834) " "
26. Last Days of Pompeii
(1834) Edward George Bulwer-Lytton, 1805-1873
27. Rienzi, Last of the Tri-
bunes (1835) " " "
28. Last of the Barons (1843) " " "
29. Harold, Last of the Sax-
ons (1848) " " "
30. The Caxtons (1849) " " "
31. Pickwick Papers (1837) Charles Dickens, 1812-1870
32. Oliver Twist (1838) " "
33. Nicholas Nickleby (1839) " "

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| 34. Old Curiosity Shop (1840) | Charles Dickens |
| 35. Barnaby Rudge (1841) | " " |
| 36. Martin Chuzzlewit (1844) | " " |
| 37. Dombey and Son (1848) | " " |
| 38. David Copperfield (1850) | " " |
| 39. Bleak House (1853) | " " |
| 40. Tale of Two Cities (1859) | " " |
| 41. Jane Eyre (1847) | Charlotte Brontë, 1816-1855 |
| 42. Vanity Fair (1848) | William Makepeace Thackeray, 1811-1863 |
| 43. Pendennis (1850) | " " " |
| 44. Henry Esmond (1852) | " " " |
| 45. The Newcomes (1854) | " " " |
| 46. The Virginians (1859) | " " " |
| 47. The Scarlet Letter (1850) | Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1804-1864 |
| 48. House of the Seven Gables
(1851) | " " |
| 49. The Marble Faun (1860) | " " |
| 50. Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852) | Harriet Beecher Stowe, b. 1812 |
| 51. Hypatia (1853) | Charles Kingsley, 1819-1875 |
| 52. Westward Ho! (1855) | " " |
| 53. Hereward the Wake (1866) | " " |
| 54. John Halifax, Gentleman
(1856) | Dinah Mulock Craik, 1826-1887 |
| 55. The Cloister and the Hearth
(1861) | Charles Reade, 1814-1884 |
| 56. Elsie Venner (1861) | Oliver Wendell Holmes, b. 1809 |
| 57. Adam Bede (1858) | George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans,
Mrs. Cross) 1819-1880 |
| 58. The Mill on the Floss (1860) | George Eliot |
| 59. Silas Marner (1861) | " " |
| 60. Romola (1863) | " " |
| 61. Middlemarch (1871) | " " |
| 62. The Man Without a Country | Edward Everett Hale, b. 1822 |
| 63. Lorna Doone | R. D. Blackmore, b. 1825 |
| 64. A Daughter of Heth | William Black, b. 1841 |
| 65. John Inglesant | J. H. Shorthouse, b. 1834 |
| 66. All Sorts and Conditions of
Men | Besant, b. 1838; Rice, 1844-1882 |
| 67. A Modern Instance | W. D. Howells, b. 1837 |
| 68. The Rise of Silas Lapham | " " |
| 69. A Hazard of New Fortunes | " " |

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| 70. The Grandissimes | George W. Cable, b. 1845 |
| 71. But Yet a Woman | Arthur S. Hardy, b. 1847 |
| 72. Robert Elsmere | Mrs. Humphry Ward, b. 1851 |
| 73. David Grieve | " " |
| 74. Marcella | " " |
| 75. Tess of the D'Urbervilles | Thomas Hardy, b. 1840 |
| 76. Greifenstein | F. Marion Crawford, b. 1854 |
| 77. Saracinesca | " " |
| 78. Sant' Ilario | " " |
| 79. Don Orsino | " " |
| 80. Pietro Ghisleri | " " |

Continental Fiction.

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| 81. Don Quixote (1605) | Cervantes, 1547-1616 |
| 82. Wilhelm Meister (1796) | Goethe, 1749-1832 |
| 83. Corinne (1807) | Madame de Staël, 1766-1817 |
| 84. The Betrothed (1822) | Manzoni, 1785-1873 |
| 85. Consuelo (1844) | George Sand, 1804-1876 |
| 86. Countess of Rudolstadt | " " |
| 87. Count of Monte Cristo (1844) | A. Dumas, 1802-1870 |
| 88. The Wandering Jew (1845) | Eugène Sue, 1804-1859 |
| 89. Hunchback of Notre Dame (1831) | Victor Hugo, 1802-1885 |
| 90. Les Misérables (1862) | " " |
| 91. Synnöve Solbakken (1857) | B. Björnson, b. 1832 |
| 92. Taras Bulba (1834) | N. Gogol, 1809-1852 |
| 93. War and Peace (1865-1868) | Count Léof Tolstoi, b. 1828 |
| 94. Anna Karénina (1875-1878) | " " " |
| 95. Crime and Punishment (1868) | F. M. Dostoyevsky, 1821-1881 |
| 96. With Fire and Sword (1890) | Henryk Sienkiewicz |
| 97. The Deluge (1891) | " " |
| 98. Jack (1873) | Alphonse Daudet, b. 1840 |
| 99. The Nabob (1877) | " " |
| 100. Numa Roumestan (1882) | " " |

